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THE

MYSTERY

OF

GODLINESS,

Consider'd in

LXI. SERMONS.

WHEREIN

The DEITY of CHRIST is prov'd upon no other Evidence than the *Word of GOD*, and with no other View than for the *Salvation of Men.*

In Two VOLUMES.

By *THOMAS BRADBURY.*

Jer. xv. 15, 16. *Know that for* THY SAKE *I have suffer'd Rebuke. Thy Words were found, and I did eat them, and thy Word was unto me the Joy and Rejoicing of my Heart, for I am called by* THY NAME, *O Lord God of Hosts.*

VOL. I.

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TO THE

CONGREGATION

AT

FETTER-LANE,

AND

Thoſe who attend the Lord's-Day's Evening Lecture at *Salter's-Hall.*

THE *doctrine of the ever bleſſed Trinity was never known (till very lately) to be matter of debate among Proteſtant Diſſenters. Our Fathers univerſally own'd it with reverence and a godly fear; and the generation who have riſen up to deny it, appear to act from a* new ſpirit, *as well as upon a* new ſcheme; *as if that which had always the chief place among articles of faith, was now to be lifted up*

in ſcorn, and purſued with banter inſtead of argument. I ſhall have no regard at preſent to the ungenerous oppoſitions that have been made to the cauſe by exclamations about charity, reviling confeſſions, and making a ſubſcription *to the faith, which has been the conſtant practice of miniſters ever ſince the reformation, to be a brand of infamy. 'Twas found the ſhorteſt way to amuſe the world, and divert 'em from the only queſtion they had before 'em,* viz. *whether the doctrine, as we have own'd it, is reveal'd in the Bible or no. 'Tis a great deal eaſier to load an opinion with the hard names of perſecution, creed-making, and impoſition, than to prove that it is an error.*

We have endeavour'd that our faith may ſpread abroad, to be ſeen and read of all men, in a wellknown confeſſion; that "There "there is but one only the living and true "God; and, that there are three Perſons in "the Godhead, the Father, Son, and holy "Ghoſt; and theſe three are one God, the "ſame in ſubſtance, equal in power and "glory.

The propoſition is complex, and can either be defended or baffled, no other way than by taking the ſeveral doctrines apart, which are plainly theſe five.

I. That there is but one only the living and true God. *This we affirm, not only upon the principles of reaſon, but that* greater light *that rules the church, the written Word.*

Word. Therefore the charge of Tritheiſm, *or owning of* three gods, *would have been ſpar'd by any but ſuch as have a contempt of modeſty, againſt thoſe who confeſs no more than* one. *Under this glorious name of* God *we mean* " *a Spirit, infinite, eternal,* " *and unchangeable in his being, wiſdom,* " *power, holineſs, juſtice, goodneſs and truth.*" *And as this deſcription belongs to the Moſt High alone, ſo we dare give the title* (*in that ſenſe*) *to none beſides him.*

II. *Another branch of our confeſſion is, that* there are three Perſons in the Divine Nature; Father, Son, and holy Ghoſt. *Theſe are plainly diſtinguiſh'd; the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Spirit. The liberty that ſome take to wrangle about the manner of the difference, whether it is ſpecifical or numerical, only ſhews a vanity that* would be wiſe, *as if they thought to make an experiment whether God is incomprehenſible. 'Tis enough for us, that the Scripture mentions neither more nor fewer than three. We add, that* theſe three are one God. *This is to be prov'd in parts, and therefore the next propoſition is,*

III. *The Father is reveal'd in his own book under theſe glorious titles.*

IV. *The Son, and*

V. *The holy Ghoſt are declar'd in the names, attributes, operations and honours, which we read of as arguments of eternal power and godhead.*

Whether any of these doctrines are false or no, ought to be tried by taking it asunder from the rest. But if they are all true, that is, agree to the language of the Bible, then the general article is a fair conclusion from the whole, that these three are the same in essence, and equal in power and glory.

'Tis the fourth *of these propositions that I have consider'd in the following sermons:* First, *As a reveal'd* truth. Secondly, *As an awful* mystery. Thirdly, *As an argument of practical holiness.*

1. *In proving the* truth, *that Christ, equally with the Father and holy Spirit, is the supreme God, I have honestly given a reason of the hope that is in me, by searching the Scriptures daily whether the things are so or no. The opinions of Fathers, councils, divines of all sorts, and indeed the whole body of the faithful, from* Egypt *even until now, has been well collected by others; but you know, I have us'd none of these arguments, tho' I always read with pleasure by what a great cloud of witnesses we are encompass'd; nor can I think it very modest that they who have obtain'd so good a report thro' faith, should be treated with contempt by such as are far from being superior to 'em in learning or holiness. However, you are my witnesses, and so may the whole world be now, that I have pleaded no authority but that of Scripture. As I read, I believe; as I believe, so I speak. I*

can

can affirm, as Mr. Chillingworth *did, that* THE BIBLE, THE BIBLE *is the rule of my religion, and of all that I either think or ſay about the Divinity of Chriſt. And I fear the memory of that great man is like to ſuffer, who was known ſo much to* cry up the Bible *when the memoirs of his life are furniſh'd by thoſe who* cry it down. *This doctrine is not maintain'd upon a ſcanty revelation; you will ſee, that the evidence for it is not confin'd to two or three texts, but flows in all the ſtream of Scripture; as you will find by a large collection at the end of theſe Sermons, which if carefully read, will have their weight in proving the Divinity of Chriſt, and the myſtery of godlineſs.*

2. *This I have alſo conſider'd as a* myſtery. *'Tis the familiar and darling word of the holy Spirit, and therefore to treat it with contempt is talking without book. I found, that in this part of my work, I was come to the main pinch of the queſtion; whether God has ever told us things that we could not have diſcover'd without revelation, and that we cannot explain and comprehend with it; and if he has done ſo, whether we ought not to believe him upon his own word?*

3. *'Twas a thing of the greateſt weight with me, that this is a doctrine of* godlineſs. *It appears ſo both in the book of God, and in the lives of men. Charity, humility, devotion,*

tion, and univerſal benevolence, are not impair'd by a belief of the Trinity; and, as we find by experience, they never grow upon an oppoſition to it, they are not Arian *plants, as far as I can either hear or ſee.*

I hope as the providence of God led me into this ſubject, ſo his good Spirit has carried me thro' it. The ſermons have been of ſervice to myſelf, and to many of you that heard 'em; ſo that whilſt I was imparting to you this ſpiritual gift, I have been eſtabliſh'd together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. I have given ſome account of my preaching upon this text in the laſt ſermon, and therefore I ſhall ſay no more in this preface upon that head.

I have endeavour'd to make the reader's work as eaſie as I could, by diſtinguiſhing the particular deſign of every ſermon with a capital word in the running title. Thus, when I'm proving *the* Deity *of Chriſt, you'll find it in thoſe parts of the diſcourſe where the word* GOD *is ſo printed. When the doctrine is expos'd to our adoration and* wonder, *'tis conſider'd as a* MYSTERY, *and the* application *you will meet with, when it's urg'd as an argument of* GODLINESS.

I have heard the defaming of many ſince my zeal for this doctrine convinc'd 'em I was not to be brought into their meaſures, either to bury the truth, or to betray it. But ſome of you God has made to differ, by ſetting home upon your hearts the arguments

that

that were so uneasie to them. They went out from us who were not of us, and by their going out it is manifest they were not all of us; but this vacancy has been more than fill'd up by several whom these very sermons were a means of bringing into our church, which had been a stone of stumbling to others. To those that perish Christ is foolishness, but to them who are sav'd, He is the wisdom and power of God.

I have known what it is, as many of you can remember, to be lampoon'd in pamphlets, bely'd in news-papers, threaten'd by great men, and mobb'd by those of the baser sort, for the British *liberty, and the* Hanover *succession. And if I'm to run the same round over again for the commonwealth of* Israel, *and the King of kings, I shall think, as* Dr. Owen *saith,* "*It is no small honour* "*to be reproach'd by men given up to a spi-* "*rit of railing and reviling; and no person* "*of sobriety will contend against those who* "*reject with scorn the eternal Deity of the* "*Son of God, and the satisfactory atone-* "*ment he made for the sins of men.*" *Doctrine of the Trinity vindicated,* p. 145.

I can say upon this argument, what one, whom both the grace of God, and the wrath of man have made eminent in the christian world. His last will and testament gives such an evidence of the witness he had within himself, that if I might but feel his joys, I could be content to succeed him in all the reproaches

reproaches that were pour'd upon him from Popiſh *and* Socinian *malice.*

" * *I profeſs,* as he ſaith, *according to the* " *meaſure of God's favour to me, that I* " *have deſign'd both from the pulpit and* " *the preſs, to deliver his pure and uncor-* " *rupted word. And I alſo aver, that in* " *all my diſputes with the enemies of the* " *Goſpel, I have us'd no crafty or deceitful* " *methods, but gave myſelf up to an honeſt* " *and open defence of truth. But, alas!* " *my ſtudy and zeal (if it's fit to be call'd* " *ſo) was ſo faint and languid, that I con-* " *feſs myſelf a wanting in many things that* " *were ſuitable to that noble cauſe.*

* Profiteor, me ſedulo pro modo gratiæ & benignitatis qua Deus erga me uſus eſt, operam dediſſe, ut cum in concionibus, tum etiam in ſcriptis pure ac caſte verbum ipſius prædicarem, & fideliter ſacram ipſius ſcripturam interpretarer. Teſtor etiam ac profiteor, me in contentionibus & diſputationibus omnibus, quæ mihi cum hoſtibus Evangelij habendæ fuerunt, nullis præſtigijs, nullis malis artibus & ſophiſticis uſum eſſe; ſed candide ac ſincere in veritate propugnanda verſatum eſſe. Verum, hei mihi! ſtudium illud meum & zelus (ſi hoc nomine dignus eſt) adeo remiſſus & languidus fuit, ut innumera mihi ad munus meum præclare fungendum defuiſſe fateor.

To this declaration in his last will, *I wil add what he does in ſome of his* last words *to the magiſtrates and miniſters of* Geneva.

" * *As to the doctrine which you have* " *heard from me, I profeſs that I did not* " *take it up in a haſty dubious way, but* " *taught with ſincerity the word of God:* " *and had I acted otherwiſe, I ſhould have* " *had as many fears of his anger, as I now* " *have hopes that my work in preaching* " *has not diſpleas'd him. Therefore I take* " *the greater liberty to declare before God* " *and you, that I make no doubt but Satan,* " *after his old way, will raiſe up wicked,* " *unſtable, and giddy men to corrupt the ſin-* " *cere doctrine that I have deliver'd among* " *you.*

* Quod ad doctrinam attinet quam ex me audiſtis, teſtor me non temere neque incerto, ſed pure ac ſincere verbum Dei mihi concreditum docuiſſe, cujus iram alioqui tam ſcirem huic capiti meo jamjam imminere, quam certus ſum meos in docendo labores ei non diſplicuiſſe. Idque coram Deo & vobis eo libentius teſtificor, quod minime dubitem Satanam prout conſuevit, improbos, leves, vertiginoſos denique homines corrumpendæ quam ex me audiviſtis, ſinceræ Doctrinæ excitaturum.

CALVINI VITA.

Thro'

Thro' the Divine goodneſs, I can make this reflection on that miniſtry that I have receiv'd; and tho' innumerable follies have eaſily beſet me, for which I deſire to be humbled, yet for the ſpace of above eighteen years in which I have been a Paſtor, and twenty years of my ſervice in the evening-lecture, I have never either denied a truth that appear'd evident to ME, *or ſhamm'd one that I thought uſeful to* YOU.

I recommend both you and the ſermons that are now put into your hands to the bleſſing of that JESUS *for whoſe ſake, and in whoſe cauſe ſo great a part of my life and ſtrength have been ſpent among you.*

And I beſeech you, brethren, for the Lord Jeſus Chriſt's ſake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye ſtrive together with me, in your prayers to God for me, that I may be deliver'd from thoſe that do not believe, and that my ſervice may be accepted of the Saints; that I may be among you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreſhed. Now the God of peace be with you all, Amen, *Rom.* xv. 30,—33.

SERMON

SERMON I.

March 30. 1718.

1 Tim. iii. 15.

—*The* Pillar *and* Ground *of* Truth.

THIS Epiſtle was writ to *Timothy*, *that he might know how to behave himſelf in the Houſe of God, which is the Church of the living God.* ver. 14.

In the Old Teſtament theſe two Names are apply'd to different Things. *The Houſe of God* was the *Place* he had choſen: firſt the Sanctuary, and then the Temple: *The Church of God* was the *People* whom he had ſet apart for himſelf, the Nation which he took out of the midſt of another; theſe the Martyr *Stephen* calls the *Church in the Wilderneſs.* But in the New Teſtament the Houſe of God is no other than his Church or People. *He dwells not in Temples made with Hands.* Every particular Believer is *the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt*; and a Society of them is that *whole Building that grows together into an holy Temple in the Lord.* Deut. iv. 3, 4. Acts viii. 38. — 48. 1 Cor. vi. 19. Eph. ii. 21.

SERM. I.

The Connexion of the next Words [*the Pillar and Ground of Truth*] has disturbed the World with Volumes of Argument, and Rivers of Blood. Some Divines think, (and I own my self to be of their Opinion) that here the Apostle begins a new Sentence, and what is plac'd at the End of this Verse, should be the Head of the next; and then we shall read it thus; *The Pillar and Ground of Truth is the Mystery of Godliness, which is great without Controversy, that God was made manifest in the Flesh*, &c. In this view I shall consider the Text. But in order to clear the Road, I must take some Notice of the other Opinions that many have contended for; and they are two.

I. THAT *the Church* is *the Pillar and Ground of Truth.* Several Protestant Authors have explain'd this Notion with a great deal of Modesty, and say it signifies no more than that Christians in the new Testament have the custody of the Gospel, as to the *Jews* under the Law were committed *the Oracles of God.* Or, to express their beloved Maxim in their own Way, "There is no Truth out of the "Church." Others imagine that as the Laws of several Countries us'd to be publish'd on *Pillars* where the People might read 'em, so the Church is to make an open *Declaration* of the Truth that God has reveal'd. 'Tis certain that neither of these Opinions can be denied: The Churches of Christ have the Bible, and they ought to expose it; *from them the Word of the Lord is to sound forth.*

Rom. iii. 2.

Luke i. 1.

1 Thess i. 8.

But as those Terms [*The Pillar and Ground of Truth*] are a noble Character of something or other, so there are many who, when they apply it to the Church, suppose a great deal more from it than I can. As, *First*, That the Church is to determine what is Truth and what is Error; as if our *Faith was to stand in the Wisdom of Men*, and not *in the Power*

1 Cor. ii. 5.

Power of God. Secondly, That the Evidence of any Truth is owing to the Authority of the Church; whereas how great soever the Ministers of the Gospel are, οἱ δοκοῦντες στῦλοι, tho' they are accounted to be these Pillars, οὐδὲν διαφέρει, it makes no odds, *God accepts not the Person of Man*; and, *Thirdly*, That the Truth it self has no Value, if the Church denies her Concurrence. So that the Belief of the whole Mystery of Godliness shall not deliver a Man from the Brand of Heresy. SERM. I. Gal. ii, 6. 9.

Thus Men talk who had rather have the Dominion of our Faith than be Helpers of our Joy. A great many other *hard Sayings* are squeez'd out of these Words, but it is evident,

1. THAT by the *Church* in this Text, he does not mean only the Ministers. The Word never once carries that Sense in all the new Testament. *God set in the Church Apostles, Prophets, and Teachers.* And therefore if *the People*, (who certainly are *the Church)* are *the Pillar and Ground of Truth*, I believe 'tis more than the Managers of this Argument ever design'd to prove by it. 1 Cor. ix. 28.

2. 'TIS far from concluding that one Church is the Pillar of Truth to another. If this Character is given of a Church at *Ephesus*, what has that to do with one at *Rome?* But

3. IT is plain from all Reason as well as Scripture, that Truth is the Pillar and Ground of the Church, and not the Church of Truth. *We are built on the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets*; and it is *in Christ* that *the whole Building is fram'd together. We are God's Building*; and they who are *wise Master-Builders have laid a Foundation*; but that is, and can be, no other than *Christ*. When this Foundation is destroy'd the Church falls to the Ground; *their House will be left unto 'em desolate.* That which compacts a Society is, that *our Hearts* Eph. xi. 20, 21. 1 Cor. iii. 9, 10. 11. Col. ii. 2.

SERM. I. *are knit together in love,* and that which it is raised upon is, *the Acknowledgment of the Mystery.* If the Churches depart from the Truth as it is in Jesus, the *few* that have *not defiled their Garments* ought to *withdraw, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness.*

Rev. iii. 4. 1 Tim. vi. 5. Eph. v. 11.

II. THERE are some who think that *Timothy* himself has these great Titles given him. And in Relief to their Opinion they suppose that a Particle is want in the Text; he is exhorted how to behave in the Church *&c as the Pillar and Ground of Truth.* This Compliment they pay not to his Person, but to his Office. They don't say it of him, because *he knew the Scriptures,* and *did the Work of an Evangelist, making full Proof of his Ministry, and rightly dividing the Word of Truth:* Had these been the Foundations of the Character, we could let the Names and the Merit go together: But the Reason of their ascribing these noble Titles to *Timothy* is because he was Bishop of *Ephesus,* and so the Glories belong not to the *Man* but to the *Chair.* They argue that his Opinion ought to be decisive in all Matters of Faith, from the Pre-eminence he had above the rest of the Pastors. And thus are Men setting up the Ambition which the Grace of Grace of God pulls down. It is apparent if this is said of *Timothy,* he that gives him the *Name,* gives him Instructions. He *besought him to abide* at *Ephesus*; he *committed a Charge to him*; he bids him *take heed to himself and to his Doctrine:* He has left us no room to imagine, that any Authority is crowded into these Titles, or that it slides down from *Timothy* to all his Successors, let 'em be never so vile and foolish, to the End of the World.

2 Tim. ii. 15. — iii. 15. Eph. i. 3. — 18. — iv. 16.

I shall here enquire into three Things:

1. WHAT it is that the Apostle calls the *Pillar* and *Ground* of Truth.

2. WHAT

2. WHAT the *Truth* is that will be thus supported. SERM. I.
3. IN what *Senſe* we are to underſtand theſe Terms of *Pillar* and *Ground.*

1. WHAT is the *Thing* that he calls by theſe great Names? My Anſwer to this will lie in a narrow Compaſs (becauſe I have already diſcharg'd the Interpretations that ſome are contending for) by ſhowing you how little Reaſon there is to underſtand it of the *Church*, and how much leſs of *Timothy*; I therefore think that from the End of this Verſe he begins a new Sentence. He had ſhow'd him in the former Part of the Chapter what ſort of People *Biſhops* and *Deacons* ought to be; but ſtill puts him in mind that the main Deſign of a Miniſter is to report the glad Tidings of Salvation. The Particle Καὶ, AND, in the beginning of the 16th Verſe looks like a Continuation of the former Sentence, rather than a freſh Diſcourſe. I ſhall therefore underſtand the Words in their Connexion to what comes after; That the *Pillar and Ground of Truth, and the Myſtery of Godlineſs, that is great without Controverſy, is that God was manifeſt in the Fleſh*, &c. By this Account you will ſee that he ſpeaks of the Chriſtian Religion, Ver. 1-15.

{ 1. In general Characters,
{ 2. In its main particular Branches.

I. THE general Account that he gives us of it, is under three Heads.

1. 'Tis the *Pillar and Ground of Truth*; that all uſeful Knowledge is rais'd and hung upon it.

2. NOTWITHSTANDING that, it is *myſterious*, and *greatly ſo without Controverſy.*

SERM. I.

3. It has a Tendency to promote and exalt all practical Religion; it is *the Mystery of Godliness.* This, he says in general of *the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God that was committed to his Trust.*

Ch. 1. 11.

II. In particular he lets us see that Christianity consists in the Knowledge of *Jesus*; there are six Articles of the great Record.

(1.) His Incarnation, He was *manifest in the Flesh.*

(2.) His Resurrection, He was *justified in the Spirit.*

(3.) His Approbation above, He was *seen of Angels.*

(4.) His Method of revealing himself abroad, He was *preach'd unto the Gentiles.*

(5.) The Success of this Report, He is *believ'd on in the World.*

(6.) His Reward for the Service and Suffering of Death, He was *receiv'd up into Glory.*

These are so many Parts of the Knowledge we have of him, and these three Characters may be affirm'd of them all; *First*, That they are the *Pillar and Ground of Truth.* Every other Opinion must have all its Weight laid upon these, be consistent with them, and continually referr'd to 'em. *Secondly*, There is a *Mystery* in every one of these. You may call the whole a Chain of Wonders. We are surpriz'd as we go along. We could never have known them but by the Revelation of the Spirit, who *searches all Things, yea the deep Things of God.* We may place these Words at the Foot of the whole Account *Blessed be the Lord God of* Israel, *who only does wondrous Things.* And, *Thirdly*, They are all of a practical Nature. The Person who receives them with a Belief of the Truth, and an Astonish-

Psal. lxxii. 18.

ment

ment in the Myſtery, will find the good of them in a Life of Duty. It is all *according to Godlineſs*, as that takes in both the *Worſhip* we pay to God, and the *good Works* by which our Light ſhines out before Men. SERM. I. Ch. vi. 3.

I begin with the firſt general Character, of the Chriſtian Religion, and ſhall give you my Senſe of the Words in this Propoſition, that

" THE Doctrine or Report of Chriſt Jeſus
" which we have in Scripture is the Pillar and
" Ground of Truth."

All other Notions are true or falſe, trivial or important, holy or polluted, as they are either concern'd with this or remote from it. We want to *know nothing but Jeſus Chriſt and him Crucify'd.* 1 Cor. ii. 2.

Here we may enquire what that TRUTH is which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of. And you will eaſily ſee it muſt be confin'd to things that *accompany Salvation*, or as it is ſaid in another Place, whatever pertains *to the Kingdom of God.* This is the *Grace and Truth that came by Jeſus Chriſt.* Heb. vi. 9. Acts i. 3. Joh. i. 17.

There is *a Truth of Hiſtory* that we take delight in; to know what is doing in diſtant Countries, or has been done in former Ages: But this is rather our Entertainment than our Concern.

There's *a Truth of Argument*; this is ſtill more engaging; as 'tis the proper Food of our Reaſon. We have a Power of thinking, trying, judging and approving; theſe are intellectual Joys, *when Wiſdom enters into their Heart, Knowledge is pleaſant to thy Soul.*

There's alſo *a Truth of Converſation*; which is what we call Integrity. This appears with a Beauty to others, and leaves a Calmneſs in our own Souls. 'Tis a Satisfaction to think that the Perſons we deal with are open and hearty to us, but it is

SERM. I.

more supporting to know that our selves are so to them. An honest Man will have greater Pain in doing one deceitful Action than in receiving an hundred.

Besides these, there are *Truths of Philosophy*, that have no Concern with the Doctrine of Christ Jesus. A Man may either believe or reject them without any Influence on his Religion. It's all one to a Christian whether he thinks the Earth or the Sun moves. But the Truth that our Apostle means is of another kind.

1. 'Tis about the greatest Concerns.
2. It comes with the fullest Evidence.
3. 'Tis always the same.
4. 'Tis follow'd with the best Effects.

1. The whole Bulk of *Truth* that stands upon the Doctrine of Christ Jesus is about the greatest Concerns of humane Nature. Knowledge and Interest are thrown together. To be wise is to be happy. They are our Food. We are *nourished up in the Words of Faith and of good Doctrine; wholesom* medicinal *Words ὑγιαίνοντες*. 'Tis *Health to the Soul.*

1 Tim. iv. 6. —6. 3.

Many of our Studies are bare Amusements; and yet with what an Appetite do we catch at little Probabilities as the Ground of a darling Opinion? and that about things that will make us never the better, whether we be right or wrong? They give no Sweetness to this Life and no Assurance of another. Those learned Men are justly admir'd who have seen the Confusion of the old Philosophy, and drawn out a more likely Scheme. But if they could demonstrate all they say, it rises no higher than to give an Entertainment. They may be sick and poor, vicious and ignorant of God, with all that Knowledge. The *Ephesians* were skilled in *curious Arts, walking in the Vanity of their Mind*; but they were

were *darkened in their Underſtandings*, and *alienated from the Life of God through the Ignorance that was in them*. Indeed an Acquaintance with the Things of Nature may be improved, as by ſome great Men it is, to an Admiration of the Works of God; for *in Wiſdom he has made them all*. But thoſe Reflections are no part of the Learning, nor do they always go along with it. SERM. I. Acts xix. 19. Eph. iv. 17. 18. Pſal. civ. 24.

Now the Doctrine of Chriſtianity is to acquaint you with the Method that God has taken for Himſelf to be glorious, and you to be happy. That you may *wait for his Son from Heaven, even Jeſus who deliver'd us from the Wrath to come*. 1 Theſſ. i. 10.

You do not read that God was *manifeſt in the Fleſh* merely to be acquainted with the Story, but that the *Love and Kindneſs of our Saviour towards Man may appear*; to ſhew us how, *according to his Mercy, we are ſaved by the waſhing of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt*. All his Enemies knew that he was *made of a Woman, and under the Law*, but our Concern in this is to ſee by what Method we *are redeemed from under the Law, and receive the Adoption of Sons*. Tit. iii. 4. — 5. Gal. iv. 4. 5.

His being *juſtify'd in the Spirit*, the Teſtimony given to him by the Holy Ghoſt, is more to us than a Matter of Fact. *We believe in God who rais'd him from the dead, and gave him Glory*. Theſe are all ſo many Articles for the Conviction of Sinners, for the quieting of a wounded Conſcience, the building up of the Weak, and the drawing on to *Sion* thoſe that have ſet their Faces thitherwards, that *we being juſtify'd by his Grace, may have Peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; in whom we have Acceſs by Faith into the Grace wherein we ſtand, and rejoyce in Hope of the Glory of God*. 1 Pet. i. 21. Rom. v. 1, 2.

His being *ſeen of Angels*, admir'd, ador'd, and obey'd by the Armies of Heaven, is more than a Speculation.

SERM. I.

Speculation. In their Duty we see our own Happiness; we argue from thence, that *his Throne is*
Psal. xlv. 6. *for ever and ever*, and that those who worship him
Heb. i. 14. will be *ministring Spirits to all the Heirs of Salvation.*

That he was *preach'd unto the Gentiles* is the Means of bringing this Salvation to us. That he is *believ'd on in the World* is our Comfort, and if we have obtain'd the *like precious Faith*, it is our Life. That he was *receiv'd up into Glory* is a Secu-
Joh. xx. 17. rity to our Hope, for he went *to his Father, and our Father, to his God, and our God*; And *to them*
Heb. ix. 28. *that look for him, He shall appear the second Time without Sin, to Salvation.*

So that, this is *Truth indeed*, not only evident, but important; Here's a Doctrine contriv'd on Purpose to let Sinners know they are *Prisoners of Hope. To make all Men see what is the Fellowship of the*
Eph. iii. 9. *Mystery, that from the Beginning of the World was hid in God.* That we have our Κοινωνία, *Fellowship* with, and our *Concern* in.

Suppose any ingenious Person has his Head turn'd to Mathematical Studies, he is pleas'd to find what is in the Bowels of the Earth, the Courses of Nature, and the Power of Engines; but, if he sees that by these Things his Estate may be improv'd; if, by that Study, he is capable of draining his Mines, it entertains more than his Curiosity. And so it is here: We do not only speak *the Wisdom*
1 Cor. ii. 7. *of God in a Mystery*, but *the hidden Wisdom that was ordain'd before the World to our Glory.* The Knowledge we have by the Gospel is of *Things, that are*
— 12. *freely given to us of God.* We consider his Wisdom, his Truth, his Goodness, and his Justice, as they cause their Glories to shine out in our Redemption, there's no part of this Account but what is to make you easy in a World of Cares, and hap-

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py in a World of Light. For this *Truth dwells in us, and shall be with us for ever.* SERM. I.

2. THIS Truth comes with the greatest Evidence, and that is the Testimony of God himself. We receive it with a Veneration to these two Attributes; *First*, his Wisdom, that he knows the Truth; and, *Secondly*, his *Purity*, that he will tell it. *A God of Truth and without Iniquity, just and right is he*; therefore *he who believes not, has made God a Lyar, because he believes not the Record that he has given of his Son.* But *he that receives the Testimony has set to his Seal that God is true.* 2 Joh. 2. Deu. xxxii. 4. 1 Joh. v. 10. Joh. iii. 33.

There can be no greater Reason for assenting to any Proposition than this, that God has said it. *The Words of the Lord are pure Words.* We are to take no Man's Opinion upon Trust; for they may deceive us: We should bring their Reason to the Bar of our own. But in what the Lord saith, there must be an Acquiescence, because his Knowledge receives no Error, and his Truth declares none. *Let God be true and every Man a Lyar, that he may be justify'd in his Sayings.* Don't call it the Subjection and Bondage of our Minds, or the laying aside of Reason. The great Employment of that Faculty is to enquire whether this is a Divine Revelation or no: If it is satisfy'd about that, it has gone far enough. There needs no more; for if I don't believe what I know to be reveal'd, I reproach the Nature of God, who *is not a Man that he should lye*, and *in whom is no Darkness at all.* Psal. xii. 6. Rom. iii. 4. Nu. xxiii. 19.

Still all this while, remember I am speaking of that, which, you're satisfy'd, is *reveal'd*, not what vain Man will call by that Name. No Doctrine of humane Invention has any Concern in this Argument. It *may* be true, but it has not the Evidence I am now talking of. The *Bereans* are commended as *more noble than those of* Thessalonica, because 1 Joh. i. 5. Act. xvii. 11.

S M. I. cauſe they would take nothing upon Truſt from the very Apoſtles. But then they did not ſet up their own Reaſon againſt a Divine Authority, for *they ſearched the Scriptures daily, whether the Things were ſo or no.* If they found the Doctrines in the Scriptures, it was enough; that one thing clos'd up the Mind, they never brought the Opinion down to Reaſon, or examin'd whether it might be defended that way. The whole Diſpute and Enquiry ended in this, that if God had ſaid it, they muſt receive it. No matter whether it came within the Comprehenſion of their own Minds or no. They do not ſet Reaſon as a Judge upon God, whether he ſpeaks right or wrong. They make no Trial of his Wiſdom, or his Truth. The very Examination is profane and impious; it's going beyond the Bounds of Creatures, and *breaking through to gaze.*

Exod. xix. 21.

If there is ſuch a Thing as Revelation, it muſt be the *higheſt Evidence* that a Doctrine can ever have. All other Knowledge leaves us ſhort. We make ſome few Diſcoveries, and we gueſs the reſt. Obſervation lays the Ground, and Conjecture builds upon it. That's as far as any Philoſophy can go.

Knowledge and Faith are uſually thus diſtinguiſh'd. We are ſaid to know Things that we either ſee, or that appear to our own Reaſon; we *believe* things upon the Teſtimony or Report of another. Now, 'tis without any Foundation, that People give the Preference to the Opinions we have by Knowledge, above thoſe that come by Faith; I can be as fully perſwaded of the Truth of a Thing by Report, as I can by Obſervation. I have no more doubt, that there is ſuch a Place as *Rome*, than that there is a City called *London*, and yet all the Evidence I can have of the former is the Teſtimony

of

of others. I believe it, becauſe Perſons tell me ſo. This Principle is admitted into all the Buſineſs of Life, and ſhall it have no place in Religion, where the Report comes from *a God that cannot lie?* SERM. I. Tit. i. 1.

Methinks the Apoſtle was aware that this ſort of Reaſoning would creep into the World, and therefore he lays in for it; *If we receive the Witneſs of Man the Witneſs of God is greater, for this is the Witneſs that God hath teſtify'd of his Son. He that believes in the Son of God hath this Witneſs in himſelf*, i. e. there is ſomething in his Reaſon that bears him out in his Faith; for he believes it, becauſe God has ſaid it. If I tell you that the Moon is ſo much leſs than the Earth, and the Sun ſo much larger, that the Stars move in ſuch an Orb or Circuit, that the Earth turns round, 'tis very likely theſe things are true: Probability is the higheſt that ſort of Learning can go. But if ever God had told me any of theſe Notions, I ſhould have known them better. Well, 'tis upon *this* Evidence that we ſay *God was manifeſt in the Fleſh:* What we declare to you is τὸ μαρτύριον the Teſtimony of God. Here are *immutable things in which it is impoſſible for God to lie*; and in theſe you have the *greater Conſolation who have fled for a Refuge to lay hold upon the Hope ſet before you.* 1 Joh. v. 9, 10. Heb. vi. 18.

3. THIS Truth is always the ſame. There are *divers and ſtrange Doctrines*, but *Jeſus is the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever.* The Degrees of Revelation may vary, as we know they have done. The Diſcovery of his Purpoſe towards Man has been as the *ſhining Light*; it burſt out of thick Darkneſs at firſt, and when the Eye-lids of the Morning were open, it ſhone *more and more unto a perfect Day.* But ſtill the Speaker and the Meſſage are the ſame. He *who at ſundry times and in divers manners ſpake in times paſt unto our Fathers, by the Prophets, has in theſe laſt Days ſpoken to us by his Son.* Heb. xiii. 8, 9. Heb. i. 1.

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SERM. I.

Whether Christ was to be *known* in a Promise, or in Types; in the Flesh, or in the Spirit, was determined by the several Dispensations Mankind were under. But, that he was to *come* among us, and work out an eternal Redemption, is a Doctrine as old as Paradise. 'Tis no new Discovery, that Mercy was to be glorify'd in making Salvation a Gift, and Justice in making it a Purchase. *Adam* knew this as well as we. When he was told that the *Seed of the Woman should break the Serpent's Head:* 'Tis the same in Substance with what we read afterwards, that *by Death he subdued him who had the Power of Death, that is, the Devil.* A Faith upon these Principles was a long while in the World before what we now call Christianity: By this *Abel offer'd to God a more excellent Sacrifice than Cain*; not merely by Fear, Love, and Duty, but *by Faith.*

Gen. iii. 15.

Heb. ii. 14.

—— 11. 4.

This Perpetuity of an Opinion is what no Philosophy can pretend to. Several Notions that are now received with Credit would have been thought monstrous in former Ages. Nothing can be more opposite than the Systems of our learned Men and those a thousand Years ago, about the Motion of the Sun and the Earth. 'Tis certain in this Case, the Things are the same; the Sun and the Earth took just that unvaried Course then that the do now; only People have have got another Way of thinking about 'em. And perhaps following Generations may lay aside our Principles, as we did theirs that have gone before us. Such a floating, rolling, shifting Thing is humane Wisdom.

But in Religion we declare to you *that which was from the beginning.* This Truth has been confessed ever since God had a People in the World, and shall be so to the last Breath of the last good Man that will close the last Age of Time. For though *all Flesh is Grass, and the Glory of Man as the*

1 Joh. i. 1.

1 Pet. i. 24, 25.

he Flower of Graſs, it withers and fades away, yet *the Word of the Lord endures for ever; and this is the Word which by the Goſpel is preached unto you.* SERM. I.

Some People tell us that the Rules of Church-Government alter; and indeed as far as they are humane, they muſt do ſo; for if Men will determine by their own Laws, what is decent or expedient, they ſhould remember that *the Faſhion of this World paſſes away.* But what God has given us is *for ever.* He has made Changes in the Methods of his Worſhip, but he never made any in the Doctrine of Redemption. Whether he would be ſerved by Sacrifice and Offerings is not to be anſwer'd without a Diſtinction: For as we can tell the Time when they were required, ſo we alſo know *in burnt Offerings he has no Pleaſure:* But it was always true, that Chriſt ſhould be the Saviour of his People. This was the ſame Doctrine before the World began, that it ſhall be after it is ended. For *he was verily fore-ordained before the Foundation of the World unto our Glory, but was manifeſt in theſe laſt Times unto us.* If the old Philoſophers were to riſe again, they muſt give their Thoughts a new Caſt, and unravel the Schemes which they had laboured with ſo much Pain and Pleaſure too. But if *righteous Abel* was to live among us, his Religion would be juſt the ſame with ours; only he muſt approach to God by a Mediator without a *Sacrifice*, as before he did with one. 1 John i. 1.

4. THIS Truth is attended with the moſt happy Influence. There is ſomething in the Mind of Man that makes it receive a Notion with Pleaſure according to the degree of Evidence. It ſtrikes the Soul as Light does the Eye. But of all Wiſdom, that which relates to a future Happineſs is the moſt refreſhing as well as the moſt important. *Ye ſhall know the Truth, and the Truth ſhall make you free.* It unbinds the Soul from the Captivity of Nature. John viii. 32.

Where

SERM. I.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty. God *ſanctifies us by his Truth, for his Word is Truth.* A Conviction of this is like getting out of a Dungeon, Iſrael *ſhall cry unto me, my God, we know Thee.*

2 Cor. iii. 17.

John xvii. 17.

Hoſ. viii. 2.

John xvii. 3.

Eccl. i. 18.

INDEED, it's like all other Learning, very mean and inſipid, to thoſe that have it not: But when *the Entrance of the Word gives Light, it makes wiſe the ſimple,* it enlarges the Heart, *for it is Life eternal to know the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt, whom he has ſent.* This muſt be an Exception to what *Solomon* ſaith, *in much Wiſdom is much Grief, and he that increaſes Learning increaſes Sorrow.* The Reaſon of his Maxim is plain, becauſe the things themſelves are *Vanity and Vexation of Spirit.* But when we ſurvey the Love of God towards Men, the Redemption that it preſſes to, the myſterious Glory that it's folded in, theſe are things that will hold, when the Creation is daſh'd in pieces. And therefore we may look over them with joy: This will be the grand Meditation of Heaven: For *the Sufferings of Chriſt and the Glory that ſhould follow are things that the Angels deſire to look into.* Therefore an Enquiry into them is bringing the Work of the Preſence-Chamber into the outer Rooms, and beginning a little before-hand in that which ſhall be our Employment for ever.

1 Pet. i. 12.

SER-

SERMON II.

April 13. 1718.

OUR next Enquiry is how we are to understand these Metaphors, when the Doctrine of Christ Jesus is call'd *the Pillar and Ground of Truth*. There's a great Variety of Opinions that I meet with upon this Head: For when a lively Fancy is set at work to make the most of an Allusion, we may have Particulars enow.

Some think the Words refer to *the Pillar of Cloud and Fire* which were both a Protection and a Guide to the *Jews* from *Egypt* till they came to *Canaan*. And indeed, that was a Type of our Lord's Presence with his Church to the End of the World, and of the Way that he takes in making known the Truth. He *leads us by his Counsel*, he *keeps us from falling*, and *will present us to himself with exceeding Joy*, as the Monuments of a Care that's past, and the Objects of a Love that continues for ever. The Doctrine of the Gospel answers the End of that moving Pillar, it is *a Wall of Fire around about us, and the Glory in the midst of us. He creates upon every dwelling Place of Mount* Sion, *and upon her Assemblies, a Cloud and Smoke by Day, and the Shining of a flaming Fire by Night, for upon all the Glory shall be a Defence.*

Psal. lxxiii. 24. Jude 23, 24. Zech. ii. 5. Isa. iv. 5.

Others imagine that the Apostle had in his Eye what they call the *Pillar of Coronation*, which stood in the Temple near to the Place where their Kings were crown'd. But here the Sense of the Metaphor comes heavily in, and 'tis with much ado that these Annotators apply it to *the Day of our Lord's Espousals, the Day on which his Mother crowned him.*

2 Kings xi. 14. Cant. iii. 11.

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There's another Opinion that looks fairer to our Reason, that the Words refer to the two *Pillars in* Solomon's *Temple*, one of which was call'd *Jachin*, i. e. *he shall establish*, and the other *Booz*, *in him* or *in it is my Help*; Either of these Titles may be apply'd to the Interest of Religion, and the Doctrine of the Gospel. By the Articles of Truth it appears, that God has *establish'd his Mercy in the Heavens, his Covenant is order'd in all Things and sure*; and in that is our Help; *The Lord has founded* Sion, *and the Poor of his People shall trust in it*, in that Contrivance. *The Foundation of God stands sure, having this Seal, that he knows them that are his.* This Covenant is *all our Salvation and all our Desire.*

1 Kings vii. 21.

Psal. lxxxix. 2. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Isa. xiv. 32. 2 Tim. ii. 19.

But, Lastly, some think the Apostle alludes to the Use of Pillars in the *Heathen Temples*, there being a magnificent one at *Ephesus*. On these they writ their Laws, here they painted their Gods, and from hence they expos'd the Images of their great Men. The Doctrines of the Gospel serve to all these Purposes. Here we have our Laws, *The Grace of God that brings Salvation, teaches us to deny Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil World.* Here also we see as much as we can do of our God, who *dwells not in Temples made with Hands, neither is worship'd as though he needed any Thing:* The Design of Christianity is to give us *the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ.* Again, in this Revelation, we have our Heroes; *By Faith the Elders obtain'd a good Report, We are compass'd about with a great Cloud of Witnesses*, and are *Followers of them who through Faith and Patience do inherit the Promises.* Here the righteous are *had in everlasting Remembrance.* Whenever the Gospel is preach'd, the Things that they have done are *spoken in Memorial of them.*

Tit. ii. 11, 12.

Acts vii. 48. ---xvii. 25.

2 Cor. iii. 4.

Heb. xi. 2. —vii. 1. --- vi. 12.

Psa. cxii. 6.

But,

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But, not to vex the Metaphor, and lose our selves in the Chase of so many Allusions, the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, the Report we have of him, may be call'd *Pillar and Ground of Truth*; as it is the most important of all Truths as it ought chiefly to be contended for, as other Truths are built upon it, and have a Tendency to it, and as it has the best Influence upon the Holiness and Comfort of our Souls.

1. THE Things laid down in the next Verse are the most important of all Truths. *'Tis the Record that God has given us of his Son; This is the Record that God has given to us eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son.* We have all our Concern in them. *This is the true God and eternal Life.* The Question that the Disciples of *John the Baptist* came with to our Lord was the greatest that could ever engage the Thoughts of Men, *Art thou he that shall come, or look we for another?* 'Twas with a View to *God manifest in the Flesh* that the Worthies of the Old Testament took so much Pains in going to the Temple, and were at all that Expence in Journeys and burnt offerings. *This was the Hope of* Israel *to which the Twelve Tribes instantly serving God Day and Night hoped to come.* For this our Lord came into the World, not merely to explain the Law, and be a *swift Witness* against his Enemies, but to bear his Testimony that God had sent him. John *bare Witness to the Truth, and the Father bare witness of him*, nor could that People have his *Word abiding in them, who believed not in him whom he had sent.*

1 John v. 10, 11. ver. 20. Mat. xi. 3. Acts xxvi. 7. Mal. iii. 6. John v. 33. — 37. — 38.

You see that his Empire consisted in the Knowledge of this: When he owns himself before *Pilate* to be a *King*, he adds, *to this End was I born, and for this Cause came I into the World, that I should bear witness to the Truth; every one that is of the Truth hears my Voice.* Whatever he said might be call'd *the Truth*, for in his

John xviii. 37.

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Lips was found no Guile, but what he gives that Title to with all this Eminence is the Discovery that he made of *himself*. This is *our Report*; the thing we are to carry abroad. When he pleads his very Miracles, it is *that we may know and believe that the Father* John x. 38. *is in him, and he in the Father.*

'Tis a Satisfaction to see how the Word and the Providence of God are tallying to one another; that so many Ages have roll'd away between the first Breath of the Promise, and the full Life of the Blessing, and yet it all came right. He brought *Israel* out of *Egypt* Exod. xiii. 41. 430 *Years* after he had promised it *to a Day*. He restor'd them from *Babylon* 70 Years after the time of their Captivity, and gave them *an expected End*. But Joh. i. 45. the coming of that Lord of *whom* Moses *in the Law and the Prophets did write* is the grand Article of his Psa. lxxxix. 2. *Faithfulness which shall be establish'd for ever: He that* Joh. iii. 33. *receives this Testimony hath set to his Seal that God is true.* Luke ii. 25. He is call'd *the Consolation of Israel*, as if they had *waited* for nothing else. Seeing him was enough. Good old *Simeon* deliver'd himself on that occasion like one who had got his Fill of Life, and had no more to stay for in this World: *Now letteſt thou thy Servant depart in* ver. 29, 30, *Peace, for mine Eyes have seen thy Salvation, which thou* 31, 32. *hast prepared before the Face of all People; a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of thy People Israel.*

The Period when this happened is called *the Fulness* Gal. iv. 4. *of Time*; as if all things in Nature and Providence had conspired to make that the fittest Opportunity, Rom. v. 6. *the due Time*, according to which, κατὰ καιρὸν, he came and *died for the ungodly*. *Jacob* is thought to place too much of his Affection upon one Son, when he Gen. xlv. 28. hears that he is *Lord of* Egypt, *Is* Joseph *yet alive, it is enough, I will go down to see him before I die.* He uses the same Excess of Language at their meeting: —xlvi. 30. *Now let me die, since I have seen thy Face*; as if he thought his Life was saved for nothing else but this Inter-

Interview, and that every other Mercy would be flat and low after such an Entertainment. This perhaps might be criminal in him; but there is no Danger in the Case before us. We cannot overdo it in admiring *the Love and Kindness of God our Saviour towards Man.* He speaks of himself as the great Bounty of Heaven. Thus saith he to the Woman of *Samaria*, *If thou hadst known the Gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living Water.* Every thing was the Gift of God; *Jacob* had own'd that very *well* to be so many Ages before; but he takes the Name in a Sense that can never be equall'd when it is applied to any thing else, and we may say *Thanks be to God for his unspeakable Gift.*

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Tit. iii. 4.

John iv. 10.

2 Cor. ix. 15.

2. THIS is a Truth that we are to contend for. *If the Foundations are destroy'd what can the righteous do?* There are several Doctrines that we deduce from these. Some People see the Connexion, and others do not. We may dispute with mutual Forbearance, and be as easy to the Mistakes of our Brethren as we are to their Tempers; but an Error that saps the Foundation, that digs up the Ground of Truth, is not to be endur'd without letting all tumble into Ashes. In this case Knowledge and Happiness go together. There is an Ignorance with which there can be no Religion; and therefore when the Apostle *Jude* gave *all Diligence to write about the common Salvation, it was needful for him to exhort them that they should earnestly contend for the Faith once delivered to the Saints.*

Psal. xi. 3.

Jude 3.

There are two things that I would observe to you as the matter of this same Zeal that he calls for. *First*, That it is not for any thing later than primitive Christianity, a Faith *once* deliver'd to the Saints, not to be established upon the Authority of future Councils. He that is able to receive their Dictates, let him receive them, and he that does not like them, may let them

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alone without any great Danger to his Soul. And, *Secondly*, By this *Faith* he means, not every particular Doctrine, but the main Articles of our Religion. As for Example, One thing that Christ revealed was, that there is *nothing unclean of itself*; *whatever enters into the* Mat.xv.11. *Man does not defile the Man, every Creature of God is* 1 Tim. iv. 4. *good, and to be received with Thanksgiving*; *but, if any* Rom. xiv. 14. *Man esteems any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.* Now, I am not called to contend earnestly with such a One; though I may think him in the wrong, yet I *leave him to his own Master*; I am to *receive him, but* xv. 1. *not to doubtful Disputations*; I that *eat am not to despise him that eats not*. But you will learn what this Faith is by the Errors that in the next Verse are oppos'd to it, Jude 4. *turning the Grace of God into Lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.* The Phrases used here, and in other Parts of this Epistle, let us see that 'tis the same Case which *Peter* had spoke of, who tells us of some who *bring in damnable Here-* 2 Pet. ii. 1. *sies, denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift Destruction.* This is undoing all at once.

Whatever Opinion struck at this Doctrine, that *God was manifest in the Flesh*, is exposed to the Horror of the People. They us'd to run up their Accounts 1 John iv. of Truth to this one Point; *Hereby know we the Spirit* 2, 3. *of God, every Spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh is of God*; *and every Spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh is not of God*; *and this is the Spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye heard that it should come, and even now already is in the World.* He ch. ii. 18, had told them in a former Chapter, *Ye have heard that* 19. *Antichrist should come, and there are many Antichrists.* He speaks of these as *going out from* them, by which it appears, that they once held Communion with the People of God; but there's now a Bar between 'em, ver. 21. a Distinction that is never to be made up; *Ye know*

the

the Truth and that no Lie is of the Truth : The Meaning is not, that every good Man is above Miſtakes; but there is a certain Error or Lie that is oppoſite to the whole Truth of the Goſpel, and will be eternally inconſiſtent with it : *Who is a Liar, but he that denies that Jeſus is the Chriſt, he is Antichriſt that denies the Father and the Son.* He purſues the Charge through another Epiſtle; *Many Deceivers are enter'd into the World, who confeſs not that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the Fleſh, this is a Deceiver and an Antichriſt.* Upon this he ſaith, *Whoever tranſgreſſeth and abideth not in the Doctrine of Chriſt has not God; he that abideth in the Doctrine of Chriſt has both the Father and the Son; if any Man come to you and bring not* this Doctrine, *receive him not into your Houſes, neither bid him Godſpeed.* So that, all this while you ſee, he is not recommending the private Notions of Men, nor indeed thoſe Truths of God that are of a lower Nature; but his Titles of *Deceiver* and *Antichriſt* are given to thoſe who had ſhatter'd the whole Frame of Chriſtianity, by taking away the Foundation.

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ver. 22.

2 Ep. 7.

8, 9, 10.

3. OTHER Truths are built upon this, and have their Tendency to it. Whatever elſe we inſiſt on, as Part of the Counſel of God, yet ſtill we are led hither as the *Ground* of all. Miniſters have *a Diſpenſation to fulfil the Word of God :* The Thing that we would *make known* is *the Riches of the Glory of this Myſtery*, which is *Chriſt in you*, or among you, *the Hope of Glory, whom we preach*; in this one Verſe ἐν ἔθνεσι is tranſlated *among the Gentiles*, and ἐν ὑμῖν *in you.* We have no more Concern in *the Purpoſe of God* which he *hid in himſelf* before the Foundation of the World than as it refers to Salvation. For *whom he did foreknow he predeſtinated to be conformed to the Image of his Son. He has choſen us in him, that we ſhould be holy*; we obtain an Inheritance being predeſtinated according to his Purpoſe.

Col. i. 26, 27, 28.

Rom. viii. 29.

Eph. i. 4.

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Tho' it's a *true* Notion that all things are fore-seen and appointed by an infinite Mind, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, yet it is all *useless*, if you abstract it from Religion. God has in our day *made foolish the Wisdom of this World.* The same Persons have asserted *Fatality* in the least Actions of Life, who deny *Predestination* in the great Affairs of Eternity †. As if God had determined I should move to a Coffee-house, or *any other Toy-shop*, but had left my getting to Heaven as a thing loose from all Decrees. *Solomon* saith in these Cases, that *the Legs of the Lame are not equal.* The Parts of the Notion are ill-match'd. What is it to me that every Action of my Life is fix'd, that there is a *Necessity* upon me to do this thing and not another? Where's the Benefit of an Opinion that does but intoxicate; a Fume of Philosophy that gets into the Head and makes us giddy? But take the Doctrine of *Election* as it stands in the Bible, that God has *from the beginning chosen some to Salvation through Sanctification of the Spirit and Belief of the Truth*, and 'tis both the Glory of an infinite Agent, and the Cordial of a thoughtful Creature.

† *Compare these remarks upon the Bp of* Dublin's *Serm. with the same* AUTHOR's *late* Disc. upon Liberty. *The former is* Arminianism, *and the latter* Hobbism.

2 Theff. ii. 13.

From this Set of Doctrines we argue a great many more. How does it appear, that we are *justify'd freely by the Grace of God thro' the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus*, but from this, *that he was manifest in the Flesh?* For *to this Purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil: He was made of a Woman, and under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons.* How does the Apostle deal with those who denied the Resurrection of the Dead, but by reducing that Doctrine to one of these fundamental Principles? Thus he argues it out, that *if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no Resurrection of the dead? but if there be no Resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be*

Ro. iii. 24.

1 John iii. 8.

Gal. iv. 4, 5.

1 Cor. xv. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.

not

not risen, then is our Preaching in vain and your Faith in vain: Yea, we are found false Witnesses of God, because we have testify'd of God, that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. You see that he brings in the Resurrection of Christ as the leading Article, and that by which we are to believe our own. Thus we are exhorted to a Steddiness in the Faith, *that we henceforth be no more Children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine, by the Sleight of Men, and cunning Craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the Truth in Love may grow up unto him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ, from whom the whole Body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every Joint supplies, increases to the edifying of itself in Love.* Eph. iv. 14, 15, 16.

4. THIS Truth has the most happy Influence upon the Soul both as to Holiness and Comfort. In *knowing* him we feel the *Power of his Resurrection, the Fellowship of his Sufferings, and are made conformable to his Death.* This gives us Hope in our Sorrow; for, *if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.* What a Company of useless Notions have we contended for? In getting the Victory we have only hugg'd a Shadow, an Imagination, that has no Reality or Substance in it. There's a *Knowledge that puffs up*; what we gain by it *does not commend us to God.* But if we know the Truth as it is in Jesus, there's a Change goes along with the Conviction; we are *renewed in the Spirit of our Minds: Learning Christ* is oppos'd to *committing Uncleanness with Greediness.* His coming in the Flesh, being justify'd in the Spirit, believed on in the World, and received up into Glory, are the most powerful Arguments to all Religion. Phil. iii. 10. 1 Thess. iv. 14. 1 Cor. viii. 1. ver. 8. Eph. iv. 23. ver. 19, 20.

The Faith we have in such things *works by Love; the Love of Christ constrains us*; the Love that runs thro' the several Stages of his Action συνέχει ἡμᾶς, it twitches 2 Cor. v. 14. ver. 15.

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twitches and draws us to itſelf, in a ſort of Convulſion, that we cannot reſiſt: And what is it that gives the Love of Chriſt all this Power over us? *becauſe we*
1 Cor. v. 15. *thus judge that if one died then were all dead, and that he died, that they who live ſhould not live unto themſelves, but to him that died for them and roſe again.* The Doctrine is that Chriſt died: Every one knows that; but from this he ſcatters the Seeds of Humility and Reſolution. Firſt, the Argument runs backward, that *if he died for all, then were all dead*; it ſhews us to be in a State of Guilt and Danger, miſerable and like to continue ſo; and then it leads on our Thoughts forwards, to the End he had in dying, *that they who live*, who are fetch'd into Life by him, ſhould uſe it, *not to themſelves, but to him who died for them and*
1 Tim. iv. 6. *roſe again.* Thus we are *nouriſhed up in the Words of Faith and ſound Doctrine. Don't my Words do good,*
Mic. ii. 7. *ſaith the Lord, to him that walks uprightly?* And is not his Word as *a Hammer and a Fire that breaks the Rock in pieces?* This Report has melted and moulded the
1 Tim. i. 15. Hearts of Men. As 'tis a *faithful Saying*, ſo the Holy Ghoſt makes it *worthy of all Acceptation,*

Some Notions that are engrafted upon the Chriſtian Religion, have none of this vital Virtue. *Their Stock is a Doctrine of Vanities.* The Opinions that are rais'd up *by Men of corrupt Minds*, do no manner of good; they want the Influence that we feel in all the *Myſteries of Godlineſs.* I'll give you but one Inſtance, and that is from the Notion of TRANSUBSTANTIATION. If you examine it impartially, you will find it as *Uſeleſs* as it is *Abſurd.* If it was true, it would do no good. My Soul is concern'd to know that *God was manifeſt in the Fleſh*, but not that he is manifeſt in the *Bread.* His taking upon him my Nature was needful, that
Heb. ii. 14. *by Death he might ſubdue him that had the Power of Death, that is the Devil.* And thus, *He delivers thoſe who*

who through Fear of Death, are all their Life-time subject to Bondage. But it adds nothing to this Victory that I should eat his *Body*, every Time that I remember his *Death*. My believing that his Flesh and Blood are both in Heaven and Earth, may prove that my Head has got a *monstrous* Turn, but not that it has got a *holy* one. I have as many Arguments for my Duty and Hope, if the Bread is *not* chang'd, as I can have if it *is*. So that, here's a *Mystery* and a *Miracle* thrown away upon me. My Senses cannot *receive* it, and my Faith does not *need* it. The Doctrine of Redemption, which is the Ground of my Assurance, is compleat without it. If Christ, instead of saying this is my Body, had said this is a Representation or Memorial of my Body, he had left me no way deficient either in my Holiness or my Comfort. I may believe (as we see by the Lives of those that pretend to it) that the Bread is chang'd into the Body of Christ, and yet be never the better for it. 'Tis no Security against my *eating the Bread unworthily*, and becoming *guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.* To believe that he really gave himself for me is a Faith that carries all proper Virtue along with it; *The Life that we live, is by* this *Faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us.* But to believe that a Priest *now* gives him *to us* signifies nothing at all, 'tis to believe an Impertinence. That sort of receiving him, if it was really his Body, does not make us Saints, unless every one that has taken the Sacrament, is undoubtedly saved. My Concern is about a Spiritual Feeding, that I am Partaker of him by Faith, and find that, to my Soul, *he is Meat indeed, and Drink indeed.* If I have this, I don't want his Body; and if I have it not, the Change of the Bread into the Body, makes it only *a Carnal Ordinance*; and with Reference to this it may be said, *that the Flesh profits nothing.*

Gal. ii. 20.

Thus

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Thus you see the Doctrine of Christ in the FIRST of these Divine Characters; It is *the Pillar and Ground of Truth.* It is also in the second *a Mystery;* and in the third the Principle, the Argument and Direction of all *Godliness*, as we may hereafter show: But this part of my Subject should not be dismissed without an APPLICATION.

1. IF this is the Pillar and Ground of Truth, 'tis Pity that it should be corrupted; that we cannot have the great Articles of our Religion deliver'd in the Simplicity of the Gospel. The Mystery of Godliness as the Holy Ghost reveals it, looks very great and awful; but it only tends to *darken Counsel by Words without Knowledge*, when Men have froth'd up the Heads of Doctrine in barbarous Terms. *The Trumpet* ought not to give *an uncertain Sound.* That Christ is in the Father, and the Father in him, tho' it conveys to my Soul *a Knowledge that is high, and I cannot attain unto it*, yet the Words are easy to be understood. There's a great Plainness of Speech, tho' a Depth of Wisdom. But to say he is "Light of Light, God of God, very "God of very God, is a Twirl of Words that does "not appear so full of Majesty." We say of the Doctrine and Language of Scripture, as *Solomon* does in another Case, that it is *Soundness in the Flesh*; but Phrases fetcht from the Mother of Harlots will be *Rottenness in the Bones.*

2. If this is the Pillar and Ground of Truth, what Expectations can we have from those that oppose it?

1 Cor. iii. 11. *Other Foundation can no Man lay than that which is laid, Jesus Christ.* What sorts of People God may use in the Cause of Liberty we cannot tell; He's a sovereign Agent in the whole Course of Providence; but it is not likely they should be the Pillars of a Nation, who are doing their utmost to destroy those of Christianity. When our Lord takes to himself *his great Power and*

Rev. xi. 17. *reigns*, he will suit his Tools to his Work. *The Sal-*

Psal. xiv. 7. *vation of Israel* shall no longer be fetch'd from afar,

but

but come at once *out of Sion. He raises up the Poor out of the Dust, and lifts up the Begger from the Dunghil, to set 'em among the Princes, and to make 'em inherit the Throne of Glory, for the Pillars of the Earth are the Lord's, and he has set the World upon them.* SERM. II. 1 Sam. ii. 5.

What a Connexion this has with the Glory of a Redeemer, you will see from the 47th Psalm, which is writ on Purpose to celebrate his Ascension, *the Lord is gone up with the Sound of the Trumpet.* As one of the Beauties of that Day, when this shall be better known, he closes thus, *The Princes of the People are gathered together, even the People of the God of* Abram; *for the Shields of the Earth belong unto God, and he is greatly exalted.* It was by Faith in this, and it must be so again, that *they subdued Kingdoms, wrought Righteousness, obtain'd Promises, quench'd the Violence of Fire, put to flight the Armies of the Aliens, and out of Weakness were made strong.* Pf. xlvii. 5. ver. 9. Heb. xi 34.

What we call Bravery, without these Impressions, is but like the Rushing of the Horse into the Battle; and if such a one falls, he *dies as a Fool dies:* he goes to an unknown God. But the Christian *knows in whom he has believed.* He overcomes, even in a Defeat, *by the Blood of the Lamb and the Word of his Testimony, and he loves not his Life unto the Death.* There's but little Hope in a time of Danger from those who *bend their Tongues like their Bow for Lies, but are not valiant for the Truth upon Earth; they proceed from evil to evil, and know not God.* Our Confidence is quite dissolv'd when these call themselves the Friends of Liberty, instead of trusting 'em, we must *take heed every one of his Neighbour, and not trust in any Brother; for every Brother will utterly supplant, and every Neighbour will walk with Slanders, they will deceive every one his Neighbour, and will not speak the Truth; they have taught their Tongue to speak Lies, and weary themselves to commit Iniquity.* Rev. xii. 11. Jer. ix. 3. ver. 4, 5.

See more of this in a Sermon intitul'd *The Nature of Faith*, Nov. 5. 1721.

SER-

May 11. 1718.

SERMON III.

1 TIM. iii. 16.

Without Controversy, great is the MYSTERY *of Godliness.*

WE are now to consider the *second Character* that the Apostle gives us of the Christian Religion; that though it is *true*, and a proper Object of our Belief, yet it is nevertheless MYSTERIOUS. Thus we find it suited to the three Employments of the human Soul. *First*, It is the matter of our *Faith*, what we receive and depend upon. *Secondly*, Of our Wonder, what we are fill'd and amaz'd with; and, *Thirdly*, Of our *Practice*, working it self out into Life and Duty. The first of these belongs to that which is *the Pillar and Ground of Truth;* the Second, to that which God himself has call'd a *Mystery*; and the Third, to a Doctrine that is *according to Godliness*. 'Tis made on purpose to form our Behaviour, and give us a holy Turn of Heart, and Life towards all the reveal'd will of God.

I have already consider'd this noble Chain of Doctrines as they are *true*; I am now to take a view of them under another Title, as they are *mysterious*.

ſterious. This Character, as well as the Former, belongs to all the Particulars of our Religion; to the *Manifeſtation* that God made of himſelf in the Fleſh, to his being juſtify'd in the Spirit, the Regard that was paid him by the *Angels*, the Diffuſion of his Name through the *World* by *preaching*, his inward Empire in the Hearts of the Gentiles who *believe* in him, and the Fulneſs of his Reward, as he was *receiv'd into Glory.* Theſe are all Myſteries. Though we *believe the Report* that is given us concerning them, yet they cannot fail to raiſe our Hearts, and leave us in a ſecret Confuſion. There s ſomething in every one of them that exceeds the Reaſon of Man, and yet allures it. We are loſt in delightful Mazes, that are neither to be denied nor comprehended. The *Mercy* of our God *is in the Heavens, and his Faithfulneſs reaches to the Clouds; his Righteouſneſs is like great Mountains, and his Judgments are a great deep.* Pſa. xxxvi. 5, 6.

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There are three Words in this Part of the Verſe. *Firſt*, That this is a *Myſtery*; *Secondly*, That it is a *great* one; and *Thirdly*, That it is ſo *without Controverſy.* I ſhall take them in their Order, and, ſo, at preſent, engage my Thoughts and yours upon that auguſt and mighty Name that is given to the whole Doctrine of the Goſpel, which I will convey to you in this Propoſition, that

" The Report we have of Chriſt Jeſus in the " new Teſtament is all a MYSTERY."

What this Report is, and how myſterious it appears to be, I may ſhow you through the ſeveral Branches into which the Diſtribution is made. At preſent I ſhall only conſider the Character in a general way, under the following Heads:

1. GIVE ſome Account what a Myſtery is.
2. SHOW you that the myſterious part of any Doctrine does not hinder it from being true.

3. ENQUIRE

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3. ENQUIRE into the Reasons, why God has reveal'd Mysteries in the Christian Religion.

I. WE must look into the Meaning of the Expression: what it is the Apostle would have us conceive of our Religion when he calls it a *Mystery*. I'm altogether of their Opinion who think that in this Word, he alludes to that which was either the *Glory*, or the Vanity of other Religions.

First, 'TIS well enough known that the Priests among the *Heathen*, held the People in Suspence, and led them into a foolish Veneration, by pretending to have certain Secrets in their own Keeping, which the Vulgar were not to know. By that Craft they had their Wealth. It was the Trade of the Tribe. They talk'd as if the Gods had given them a Patent for hoarding up the great Bulk of Mystery, and retailing it out at their own Pleasure. Thus they became *vain in their Imaginations, and their foolish Heart was dark'ned. Every Man was Brutish by his Knowledge, his Molten Image was Falshood.* They render'd themselves *the Rulers of the Darkness of this World.* Now for these Devotions the City of *Ephesus* had been the most famous: They were *Worshippers of the great Goddess* Diana, *and the Image which fell from* Jupiter.

Rom. i. 21.

Jer. li. 17.

Acts xix. 15.

Therefore the Apostle furnishes *Timothy* with an Answer to all the Enthusiasm of the People among whom he lived. They valu'd their Religion for Mysteries, for unintelligible Glories: and so may we do ours. Not in the crafty and mercenary way that they did. Our Mysteries are not kept as the Property of the Priests, but scatter'd and given out in an open Manner, that every one may read them. He tells the *Ephesians* that *when they read they might understand his Knowledge in the Mystery of Christ.*

Eph. iii. 4.

Secondly,

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Secondly, The *Jews* had Myſteries in their Religion. *David* deſires that God would teach him *the Wonders of his Law*. Their Duty was commonly wove into their Hope. Their Obedience was partly moral and partly ceremonial. Theirs was *the Adoption, the Glory, the Covenants, the giving of the Law, and the Promiſes.* God *dealt not with any other Nation*, as he did with them. Their Service, the Fire in their Temple, the Cloud that ſometimes fill'd it, the ſtrange Protection which they ſaw about it, was all a Myſtery. Their Figures of the Mercy-Seat above the Ark, and the Cherubims above that ſhading it with their Wings, poring upon it with Inquiſitive Looks; theſe were among the *wonderful Works that he made to be remembred.*

Rom. ix. 4. Pſa. cxlvii. 20. Pſal. cxi. 4.

Now the Apoſtle, who always endeavour'd to vindicate the Reputation of the Goſpel, would ſcarce neglect it here. *Timothy*'s Father was a *Greek*, and his own Education had been among them, as appears from his *not being circumcis'd* till he was grown up: but *his Mother and Grandmother* were both *Jews*, and read the Scriptures. He therefore lets him know, that what they ſo juſtly admir'd in the *Jewiſh* Religion, was outdone in the *Chriſtian*: tho' the *Figures* of a Saviour with which they us'd to converſe were Myſterious, yet the *Life* itſelf, in the Fleſh, in the Spirit, and in his Glory were a great deal more ſo. Therefore, You may take the Deſign of the Apoſtle in theſe two Poſitions. It was to ſhow the Preference of our Revelation, *Firſt*, to the Conceit of the Gentiles; and, *Secondly*, To the Peculiar of the Jews. It had all That, which the one pretended to in vain, and which the other poſſeſs'd in a lower Degree. For *without Controverſy great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs, God was manifeſt in the Fleſh*, &c.

Act. xvi. 3. 2 Tim. i. 5.

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There have been Debates about the Meaning of the Word. Some would gladly have us believe, that it ſignifies no more than what is eaſily comprehended: And that any Truth, though it lies the moſt open to your Underſtanding may go by that Name. But this is throwing all Language out of the World; and leaving us uncertain about the Sounds that we hear. If a Myſtery is not ſomething out of the common Way, I do not know what occaſion we have for the Word itſelf; and yet it is frequently us'd in the new Teſtament, which would never have been done, if the Apoſtle had not deſign'd to give us ſome greater Apprehenſions of what he calls by that Title. *We ſpeak the Wiſdom of God in a Myſtery, even the hidden Wiſdom, which he has ordain'd before the World to our Glory.* Theſe are call'd afterwards *the deep Things of God.*

1 Cor. ii. 7. — 10.

I ſhall not trouble you with Derivations of the Word, which all Sides are agreed in; but I take it to include theſe four Things, as it is applied to the Doctrines of Religion; 'tis ſecret, important, it could never have been known but by Revelation, and there's ſomething in it above the Comprehenſion of our Reaſon.

1. A MYSTERY is ſomething kept ſecret, lock'd up from the View of Men. This Senſe of it agrees to the Doctrines of Chriſtianity upon a threefold Account:

1. As they were conceal'd from former Ages.

2. As they are yet ſo from the greateſt Part of the World.

3. As they continue ſo in ſome Degree to God's own People.

(1.) THEY were kept ſecret from former Ages. Thus we are expreſly told that this Wiſdom of God in a Myſtery was *not made known to the Sons of Men.*

Men. The Doctrine was *hid from Ages and Generations, kept secret since the World began,* that is now manifest and *reveal'd by the writing of the Prophets, and made known to all Nations, for the Obedience of Faith.* The People of God in the old Times had general Hopes, loose and transient Views. Abraham *saw the Day of Christ and was glad;* David *being a Prophet knew that God would, of the Fruit of his Loins, raise up Christ to sit upon his Throne.* Isaiah *saw his Glory, and spake of him.* This was, in all Generations, the *Hope of* Israel. And yet, it was but little they saw or knew, in Comparison of latter Visions. We have *Life and Immortality brought out* into a better Light. They press'd in vain to our Discoveries, *Many Kings and righteous Men desir'd to see the Things that yee see, and have not seen them; and to hear the Things that ye hear, and have not heard them. They all died in Faith,* but *they had not received the Promises, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.* They were conscious to the Imperfection of their Knowledge, as you may collect from what the Woman of *Samaria* told our Lord; *We know that the Messiah comes, and when he is come, he will teach us all Things.* When *John* the Baptist had his prophetical Ordination, he was to *go before the Face of the Highest, to give the People the Knowledge of Salvation in the Remission of their Sins, whereby the Day-spring from on high would visit 'em.* Christ himself was *a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of his People* Israel. *John* was the greatest of those who were born of Women, and yet *he that is least in the Kingdom of God, is greater than he.*

SERM. VI

Eph. iii. 5. Rom. xvi. 25, 26.

John viii. 56.

Acts ii. 30. Joh. xii. 41.

2 Tim. i. 10.

Heb. xi. 40.

Joh. iv. 25.

Luk. i. 76, 77, 78.

— ii. 32.

There was something in their very Privileges that let them know the right Convictions were not yet come. Their Custom of attending the Sanctuary

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was in such a manner, that *the Holy Ghost signified thereby, that the way into the Holiest of all was not yet made manifest.* It was but *a Figure for the time present*; and the Service which *stood in Meats and Drinks, and divers Washings and carnal Ordinances,* was *impos'd on them only till the Time of Reformation.* Thus we find it was in Fact; for when the Son of Man came, he found no Faith in the Earth; they were lost in the Prophesies that related to him; for *tho' the Prophets are read every Sabbath-day, they understood them not, but fulfilled them by condemning him.* Therefore, *we speak the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, which none of the Princes of this World knew,* Men of the highest Figure in the *Jewish* Church, *for had they known it, they would not have crucify'd the Lord of Glory.* They were *shut up under the Law, to the Faith that should afterward be reveal'd.*

Heb. ix. 8.
— 9.
— 10.
Act. xiii. 27.
1 Cor. ii. 7, 8.
Gal. iii. 23.

The Apostle compares the two Dispensations to the two different Ages of Childhood and Maturity. A Child is really possest of the humane Nature; he has an immortal Soul, rational Faculties, and is a Being of the same sort with a Person grown up: But how loose are his Reasonings! though the Substance of his Opinion may be right, yet the manner of conducting it is very imperfect. Thus saith the Apostle, *When I was a Child, I thought as a Child, I spake as a Child, I understood as a Child.* This he saith of his State in the *Jewish* Religion, in which he had *profited above many his equals in his own Nation:* There was a notorious Infancy in their whole Profession. But, saith he, *when I became a Man, I put away Childish Things.* He judg'd of the same Subjects in another way.

1 Cor. xiii. 11.

Thus was the Doctrine of our Religion a Mystery. The first Name that Christ is call'd by, is *Wonderful.* The great Wonders that are now discovered, at that Time were kept hid, cover'd and vail'd,

Isa. ix. 6.

So

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So that the Children of Iſrael *could not look to the End of thoſe things, that were to be aboliſh'd*; and *this Vail is done away in Chriſt. The Heir as long as he is a Child differs nothing from a Servant, though he be Lord of all; but is under Tutors and Governours till the Time appointed of the Father: Even ſo we, when we were Children, were in Bondage under the Elements of the World; but when the Fulneſs of Time came, God ſent forth his Son.*

2 Cor. iii. 13. — 14. Gal. iv. 1, 2, 3, 4.

(2.) THESE things are ſtill kept ſecret from the greateſt part of Mankind. I do not only mean the *Heathen* who know not God, but the Inhabitants of thoſe Countries where the Goſpel has come. Our Saviour tells one of his Diſciples; *To you it is given to know the Myſteries of the Kingdom, but to them in Parables, that hearing they may hear, and not underſtand, and ſeeing they may ſee, and not perceive.* This Diſtinction that the Goodneſs of God has made between ſome and others, is what he affirms with hearty Praiſes. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou haſt hid theſe Things from the Wiſe and Prudent, and haſt reveal'd them unto Babes; even ſo Father, becauſe it ſeemed good in thy Sight.* Thus the Apoſtle purſues the Obſervation, *We are a ſweet Savour of God to them that believe and to them that periſh; to the one we are a Savour of Life unto Life, to the other of Death unto Death.* The Ground of this Difference is not only in their Will, but their Apprehenſions; *We preach Chriſt Jeſus, and him crucify'd, to them that periſh Fooliſhneſs, but to thoſe that are ſaved, both* Jews *and* Greeks, *the Wiſdom of God, and the Power of God.* He lets us be aſſur'd that *the natural Man*, by whom he does not underſtand a Perſon vile in his Morals, but one left to the conduct of his natural Reaſon, *receives not the Things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are Fooliſhneſs to him, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.*

Matt. xi. 25, 26. 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16. 1 Cor. i. 23. — ii. 14.

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The People who deny that Christianity is a Mystery, do plainly prove it; because it's lock'd up from them: *Our Gospel is hid to those that are lost;* 2 Cor. iv. 3. *the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ* does not — 4. *shine into their Hearts, but the God of this World has blinded the Eyes of those that believe not.* We see with how much Equity our Religion may go by this Name. The Learning of Persons laughs at it, their Corruptions war against it. *To the Unbelieving there is nothing pure, but their Mind and Con-* Tit. i. 15. *science are defiled;* both the Faculty that should receive the Evidence of Truth, and that which should make 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8. Impressions of *Duty. To them that believe, Christ is precious; but to them that be disobedient, he is a stone of stumbling and a Rock of Offence: They stumble at the Word, whereunto they are appointed.*

1 Cor. xiii. 19. (3.) THEY are a Secret, even to God's own People; they *know but in Part,* and so *prophesy in Part.* God has indeed open'd the Eyes of their Understanding in the Revelation of himself; but *how little a Portion do they bear of him!* We have the Means of Eph. iv. 12, 13. Grace, *Pastors and Teachers for edifying of the Body of Christ;* but we are not yet *come to the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, to the Fulness of the Stature of Christ, to the Measure of a perfect Man.* The Substantials of the Truth are as much as we can expect, that we be not *like Children tost'd to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine.*

Phil. iii. 12, 13. The more we know, the more we need; not as though we had *already attain'd, or were already perfect; but we follow after, if we may apprehend that for which we are also apprehended of Christ Jesus; Nay, we count not ourselves to have apprehended.*

The Discoveries reserv'd to another World, are laid down in those Terms that shew their Tran- 1 Joh. iii. 2. scendence to every thing here below. We are to *see Christ as he is;* as if all the Representations we have of him now were some way wrong or untrue.

We

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We ſhall ſee him *Face to Face, and know as ourſelves are known*; as if all we had now was but hear-ſay; and indeed it is no more: For *we walk by Faith* (which comes by hearing) *and not by Sight*, When we have gone as far as Time and Study can carry us, we ſtill ſee there are vaſt important Themes yet untouch'd. The *Temple of God* is not to be open'd till we get to Heaven, and there we ſhall *ſee the Ark of his Covenant*. Upon theſe Accounts it may be ſaid, *our Goſpel is hid*; It was ſo to the *Jews*, it is ſo to thoſe that are loſt; and, in part, it is ſo to the Believer himſelf; and therefore it may be call'd a Myſtery.

1 Cor. xiii. 10.

Rev. xi. 19.

2. It's call'd a Myſtery from its Importance. Several Things are kept ſecret which it would do us no good to know. It's not worth the while to take off their Vail. Many of the Heathen Diſcoveries were impertinent and empty, and ſo are all human Inventions that have crouded into Chriſtianity. Abundance of that ſort of Learning that Men admire is hard to come by, and worth nothing when we have it. But what God calls a Myſtery is compar'd to *a Garden enclos'd, a Spring ſhut up, a Fountain ſeal'd*: Things that are made both for Neceſſity and Delight. 'Tis *a Wiſdom ordain'd before the World to our Glory.*

Can. iv. 12.

1 Cor. ii. 7.

Mahomet pretended to have Revelations from his *Pidgeon*, and do Wonders upon his *Aſs*, but what do they all amount to! The Miracles in the *Popiſh* Hiſtories are ridiculous. We muſt not engage the Power of God in Trifles and Childrens Play. But the Name of a *Myſtery* as it ſtands in the new Teſtament calls up our Veneration for the Thing it belongs to. Theſe Doctrines are *hid with Chriſt in God*, they are number'd among the Endearments of Eternity; they were the Delight and ſweet Counſel that the Father and the Son took together. What

Eph. iii. 9.

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is it that the Apoſtle gives the Name to in our Text, but the Courſe of a Redeemer from Glory to Glory again! The Value of his Perſon, the Extremity of his Suffering, the Merit of his Atonement, the Extent of his Empire, the Effect of his Goſpel, and the Fulneſs of his Reward! Theſe are not only great in themſelves, being the Hiſtory of *a God*, an Account of his Journey from a Throne to a Croſs, and from thence to a Crown; but they are *our own Concern*. This is what we *flee to*, *as the Hope that is ſet before us*. 'Tis not a Trifling or a Foreign Myſtery; but by theſe Mazes of Divine Love we are train'd up, and brought on to *the Inheritance reſerv'd in Heaven for us*. 'Tis *the Love and Kindneſs of God our Saviour that appears towards Men*.

1 Pet. i. 3.

Tit. iii. 4.

3. 'T I S call'd a Myſtery becauſe it never could have been known, but by Revelation. Had not God himſelf made the great Diſcloſure, we muſt have remain'd for ever ignorant of it. The Apoſtle tells us it is ſhut out from all the Avenues of Knowledge. *Eye has not ſeen it*, Nature ſhows nothing of Redemption, *the Depth ſaith it is not in me, and the Sea ſaith it is not with me: Ear has not heard it*, Angels would never have told the Secret; the whole World was ſilent upon that Head: *Neither could it enter into the Heart of Man*; we could not have form'd any Conception or Scheme within our ſelves; we were not able to give it that poor ſort of Life, that we do to a Project in our own Imaginations, if God had not *reveal'd it to us by his Spirit*. *He made known the Riches of his Glory on the Veſſels of Mercy*. This is a Myſtery; a Truth that we could never have thought of, and muſt receive from no other than God himſelf.

1 Cor. ii. 9.

Rom. ix. 23.

This Account you may carry along with you through all the Particulars of our Religion. Who could

could ever have ſtarted the deſign that God ſhould be *manifeſt* in the Fleſh? that he ſhould come down, and not only live among us, but die for us? that he ſhould riſe again to the Eſteem of another World, and afterwards plant an Empire in this? Theſe things might have lain in the Folds of the Decree, in the ſame infinite Mind that form'd them, if God himſelf had not made them known in the Holy Scriptures. SERM. III.

4. A MYSTERY is ſomething above the Comprehenſion of our Reaſon. *The Things of God knows no Man, but the Spirit of God.* Reaſon is employed about the Evidence, whether God has ſaid it or no; but it quietly reſigns the reſt to Faith. We receive the Doctrines unexplain'd, there is a part in them that we don't underſtand; but if they are reveal'd they will be admired, and tho' ſome tell us that to confeſs a Myſtery in our Religion is to give up the Glory of it; yet I am no more aſham'd of the Wonders of the Goſpel, than I am of the Scandal that attends it, deſiring to *preach among the Gentiles the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt.* And this leads me to 1 Cor. ii. 11. Eph. iii. 8.

II. SHEW that the Myſtery of any Doctrine does not hinder it from being true. 'Tis no Objection againſt Chriſtianity that there are things in it beyond the Graſp of Reaſon. *We ſee thro' a Glaſs darkly.* This does not make it a Heap of Enthuſiaſm, a Piece of Prieſtcraft in thoſe that deliver it, or a blind implicit Faith in them that receive it, as you will ſee by the following Particulars. 1. The Difficulty or Eaſineſs of a Doctrine does not make it the Matter of our Faith, but we go entirely upon the Sufficiency of the Evidence. 2. This obtains in every part of Life, and it is ſtrange we ſhould exclude it from Religion. 3. It is no way unaccountable that the Nature and the Deſigns of God ſhould be incomprehenſible

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sible to us. 4. It is necessary that our Understanding should honour the Revelation of God by a Subjection, as well as our Wills by a Compliance. 5. These are not Mysteries of Man's forging, but we have them in the Book of God. 6. They are not conceal'd by any Party or Tribe among us, but lie open to be seen and read of all Men. Therefore, 7. The Design of Preaching them is not to set up the Tyranny of Priests, but to lead People to a Veneration for their God, a Dependence upon him, and an Application to him.

1. 'Tis no Argument against Christianity that it's a Mystery, because our believing of any thing is not at all concern'd in the Difficuly or Easiness of a Proposition, but in the Sufficiency of the *Evidence* upon which it comes. *Timothy* was to *continue in the Things he had learn'd and been assur'd of, knowing of whom he had learn'd them.*

2 Tim. iii. 14.

We must distinguish between Knowledge and Faith. Knowledge is the Opinion that we have either from the Observations of our Senses, or the Conclusions of Reason: But Faith is the Apprehension that is rais'd in us by the Testimony of another. And therefore, in that Case, we have no farther Concern than in the Wisdom and Veracity of him that reports it. As, for Example, suppose any Traveller should tell us the strange and barbarous Customs they have among the *Indians*; the Employment of the Mind upon that Occasion is, not whether these Practices are right, or whether we cou'd have imagin'd them, but whether this Man really knows what he tells, and tells what he knows. If we are satisfied that he is not deceived by others, nor we by him, we take the Story tho' it is never so unaccountable. We don't examine the Folly or Stupidity of the Action, but the Validity of the Witness, and so may be said most heartily to believe what we as throughly condemn.

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demn. Now, in the Caſe before us, we have the Report upon the higheſt Evidence: Whatever God tells us muſt be true, whether we comprehend it or no, for theſe two Reaſons: Firſt, Becauſe *he is Light, and in him is no Darkneſs at all*; he cannot be mocked. And, Secondly, *He is a God of Truth, and without Iniquity*, he cannot deceive.

Where's the difference between believing a *Myſtery* and receiving a *Prophecy?* Our Reaſon can reach to neither of them, they are equally beyond the Comprehenſion of that Faculty. When God told *Abraham* he ſhould be *the Father of many Nations*, he had as much Ground to doubt of that, as we have of any Doctrine in the Chriſtian Religion. But *he ſtaggered not at the Promiſe of God through Unbelief, he believed in Hope, and againſt Hope, accounting that he was able to do what he had promis'd.* Not that he knew the way *how*. He ſaw there were ſeveral Objections againſt it, but theſe he drowns in a Veneration for Omnipotence. *He conſidered not his own Body now dead; that* would have render'd ſuch an Expectation impoſſible; but when God was to do it, he knew it would paſs; for he that could raiſe the dead, had a right to *call the things that are not as though they were.* Should we not all of us have condemned *Abraham*, had he not thus received the Promiſe? Should we not have ſaid of him as the Angel did of *Sarah*; *Wherefore did ſhe laugh, is any thing too hard for the Lord?* Unbelief to ſuch a Word as this muſt have the Soul of Atheiſm in it, and proceed from our thinking God to be ſuch an one as ourſelves. An Unbeliever gives no other Reaſon why God cannot do it than this, that *we* cannot.

Rom. iv. 18, 19.

Well, he expects from us the ſame Veneration for his *Knowledge* that *Abraham* gave to his *Power*. *O the depth of the Riches of the Wiſdom of God! How unſearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways paſt finding out!* Why don't we receive a Myſtery, but becauſe we don't

—xi. 33.

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don't understand it? And how comes this to be a Reason against it, unless we judge that God knows no more than we do; that because a thing is inconceivable by us, it must be so to him?

If he has really told us, *there are three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and that these three are one*; if he has said that *God was manifest in the Flesh*, we have as much Reason to believe that, as *Ezekiel* had that the People should return to their own Land. The Difficulty of the Case does not throw it out of our Faith, because it is a God that speaks it; no more than it threw the Promise out of their Hope, because it was a God that should perform it. And if we put the Question upon this Doctrine, it is but the same that God himself did upon the Design, *Son of Man, can these dry Bones live?* If Nature, if Reason, was to answer, it would say No; but he returns God's Question as we must do our own, *O Lord, thou knowest*. Is it possible that three Persons should be in one Nature, and two Natures in one Person? we may say, the Lord knows. But if he has revealed it, Faith has Evidence enough. Don't say this makes Religion no more than a Reverend Blindness, that it is a Sealing up of the Understanding; for

Eze. xxxvii. 11, 12.

2. THIS Sort of Faith obtains in every Part of Life, and it is strange that we should deny it in Religion. *If we have received the Witness of Men, the Witness of God is greater which he hath given of his Son.* Thus it is in all Practice. We resign ourselves at Sea to the Conduct of others, tho' to us 'tis all a Mystery that People should know their Road and Distance from Places by the Stars. But would it not be very weak for us to say there's no such thing as naval Learning, merely because we ourselves have it not? If a Person, whose Skill and Veracity I have no doubt of, should tell me he has seen or made an Engine that by the moving of a Finger should lift up a Tun, the

1 John v. 9.

Thing

Thing itſelf is what I can neither contrive nor imagine, and yet upon my Opinion of the Man I ſhould eaſily believe it. SERM. III.

This Principle runs through the World; there could be no Living, if People were not as ſatisfied in what others tell 'em, as in what they ſee themſelves. And, what! muſt God alone be out of Credit with us! Shall a Report be to us *the Evidence of things not ſeen* in ten thouſand Caſes, and muſt it have no place in Religion? May it not be ſaid in this Caſe, *O Houſe of* Iſrael *are not your Ways unequal?* Remember our Goſpel is revealed by Him who can neither receive a Deluſion, nor give one. *His Eyes are as a Flame of Fire,* and *Deceit is an Abomination to his Lips.* 'Tis upon this Evidence that we believe; Infinite Wiſdom and Eternal Truth.

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3. IF any thing is incomprehenſible to us, it muſt be the Nature of an infinite God, and the awful Deſigns of his Will. Now this is the Myſtery of the Goſpel; it gives us the *Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God* ἐν προσώπῳ in the *Perſon of Jeſus Chriſt.* His *Mercy* to Sinners *is in the Heavens, his Faithfulneſs* to the Saints *above the Clouds. His Righteouſneſs is like the great Mountains.* Why ſhould it be a thing incredible or ſhocking to humane Reaſon, that there is a Depth in this Doctrine that it cannot reach! Do not the common Notions we have of Him that made the World tell us, that *we cannot by ſearching find out God, we cannot*

2 Cor. iv. 6.

Pſal. xxxvi. 5, 6.

Job xi. 7, 8, 9.

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not find out the Almighty to Perfection? It is higher than Heaven, what can we know? deeper than Hell, what can we do? The Measure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea. These Apprehensions diffuse themselves thro' all our Sentiments of a God.

Job xxxvii. 23. *Touching the Almighty we cannot find him out.*

If his Decrees are to be explained, or his Nature comprehended, he is not equal to an Adoration; he is become too little for our *Reverence and Godly Fear.* Our Esteem for him is upon the Ground of those Perfections, that *he is the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God.* We are forc'd to make use of these Negatives for want of Thoughts and Words that are commensurate to the Subject. There's something in the Attributes of *never-beginning* and *never-ending* that leads us out of our Depth. We are lost in our Conceptions of a Being that is *from everlasting to everlasting.* And yet, is it not the highest Reason that we should in this manner judge of him who *is before all things, and by whom all things consist?* In the Mystery of Godliness we consider his Justice, his Purity, his Goodness, and his Power, as combining all their Glories, and making 'em appear together: And, if there's any Truth in the Matter, it must be incomprehensible. *Such Knowledge is too wonderful for us, we cannot attain unto it.*

1 Tim. i. 17.

Psal. xc. 2.

Col. i. 17.

Ps. cxxxix. 6.

We look upon this whole Contrivance as a thing that was laid long before the Execution. The Scripture gives us the Date of it, from before the Foundation of the World: And are those Counsels to be setled and unfolded by Creatures *of yesterday?* Do we suppose that God liv'd without any Designs? and, if he had them, must it not be in a way transcendent to all the Enquiries of Men? Can any thing be more agreeable and certain than that *secret things belong to God, and things revealed unto us?* Does he not speak like himself, when he saith *My Thoughts are not as your Thoughts,*

Deu. xxix. 29.

Isa. lv. 8, 9.

Thoughts, nor my Ways as your Ways? And is not the Compariſon laid within all the Bounds of Modeſty, that as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, ſo are his Ways and Thoughts above ours? SERM. IV.

If there is a God, and he has form'd any Purpoſe within himſelf, it muſt be of a Bulk and Depth that we are not able to take within our Compaſs. *The Secrets of Wiſdom are double to that which is*; and therefore he ſhews himſelf a *vain Man* who will be wiſe in theſe Matters. When People ſay they will not be of a Religion that they cannot underſtand, there is one Senſe of the Word that is honeſt and good; but there's another that carries with it all the Pride of Impiety. If they mean no more by it, than that they would underſtand *why* they are of ſuch a Religion, 'tis right and fair; we ought to *give a Reaſon of the Hope that is in us*, and therefore we ſhould *have* one: But if they will admit no more into their Religion than what Reaſon could have found without a Revelation, and what it can explain and diveſt of all its Myſtery, 'tis a vile Abſurdity. *Profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe they become Fools.* Job xi. 6, 12.

Do you ſay that you'll adore no God but one whoſe Nature comes down to the Apprehenſion of yours? That you will believe nothing that he tells you, but what you might have known if he had never told it? What a narrow Deity are you taking up with? What! is this the God that made the Heavens, that formed the dry Land, that filled and bounded the Sea, of whom you ſpeak? No, ſurely; go among the Heathen, make gods as they do, and then you may underſtand all that's in them. But will you talk in this manner of him who has *meaſured the Waters in the Hollow of his Hand, meted out the Heaven with a Span, and comprehended the Duſt of the Earth in a Meaſure, and weighed the Mountains in Scales and the Hills in a Ballance? Who has directed the Spirit of* this *Lord, or* Iſa. xl. 12, 13, 14, 18, 25.

been

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being his Counſellor has taught him? With whom took he Counſel, and who inſtructed him in the Path of Judgment, and ſhewed him the Way of Underſtanding? To whom will ye liken God, or what Likeneſs will ye compare unto him? He repeats this laſt Queſtion himſelf, *To whom then will you liken me, or ſhall I be equal, ſaith the Holy One?* May not theſe Queſtions throw as much Confuſion upon your Minds as they did upon *Job*, when God ſpoke 'em out of the Whirlwind? *Who is this that darkens Counſel by Words without Knowledge? Where waſt thou when I laid the Foundations of the Earth? declare if thou haſt Underſtanding. Whereupon are the Foundations thereof faſtened, or who laid the Corner-ſtone thereof? Haſt thou commanded the Morning ſince thy Days? or caus'd the Day-ſpring to know its Place? Haſt thou entred into the Springs of the Sea, or haſt thou walked in the Search of the Depth? Haſt thou perceived the Breadth of the Earth? Declare, if thou knoweſt it all. Knoweſt thou the Ordinances of Heaven? Canſt thou ſet the Dominion thereof in the Earth?*

Job xxxviii. 1, 2, 4, 6, 12, 16, 18, 23.

Can you eſtabliſh Notions for the reſt of Mankind about the Courſe of the Stars, the Motion of the Earth, and the Periodical Flow of the Waters? No, it's plain, we know little of the Matter. Very learned Men in former Ages have left behind 'em thoſe Syſtems that we deſpiſe, and we cannot defend our own againſt the ſame Uſage from Poſterity. This Change of Opinions is an Argument that the Thing itſelf is unknown. Well, ſhall the Works of *Nature* be clos'd, and thoſe of *Grace* be open? Are there Myſteries every where in the World, and muſt there be none in Religion? Is the Wiſdom of God to be more admir'd in the Ways he takes for our temporal Subſiſtence, than it is in providing for us a Life and Immortality? *As thou knoweſt not what is the Way of the Spirit, nor how the Bones do grow in the Womb of her that is with Child; even ſo thou knoweſt not the Works*

Eccl. xi. 5.

of

of God, who maketh all. Marvellous are his Works, as the Souls of his People *know right well. There are Riches of Glory in this Mystery.* SERM. IV. Ps. cxxxix. 14.

The Argument lies in this, that if God has laid a Design of Redemption for his People, if he did send his Son into our Nature, if he made him a Propitiation for us, if we are accepted in him, and sanctify'd by him, these are things that we must believe; but upon no other Foundation than because he has said 'em. However, they will always continue to be the *deep things of God; the unsearchable Riches of Christ.* They are true upon the Light of Revelation that brings 'em, but they will be mysterious from the Matter of which they consist; and it is impossible, considering how little we know of other things, that we should ever comprehend all the Wonders of these. God dwells *in Light* unapproachable, *whom no Man has seen, nor can see.* Col. i. 27. 2 Tim. vi. 16.

4. CONSIDER how needful it is that our Understandings do their Duty to God's Wisdom by believing a Revelation, as well as our Wills be obedient to his Authority by complying with a Precept. We *have not attain'd, but follow after, if we may apprehend; and we count not our selves to have apprehended.* Phil. iii. 12, 13.

He is to be glorify'd in every Faculty; He will have the Tribute of our whole Nature. Every Faculty was polluted in the Fall, every one of them is renew'd by his Grace, and therefore they are all to have their proper Share in a Life of Duty. There's as much Reason for the Faith of a good Man, as there is for his Self-denial. What Argument is there against a Mystery that will not hold as well against a Command? I do not now mean the Duties of Justice and Mercy that should run through all our Behaviour to Men, or the Fear and Reverence that should fill our Worship to God; but there are other Parts of Obedience that every Christian knows to be needful: A Continuance in the Ways of God at the Expence of all that is dear to Flesh and Blood;

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what our Lord calls a *taking up the Cross and following him*, without which we cannot be his Disciples. Sometimes the Positions of Interest and Conscience are so malignant to one another, that *no Man can serve both God and Mammon*. We are call'd to *forsake Father and Mother, and Children, and Houses, and Lands*, for the sake of the Gospel. We have it in our Choice to live with Fame and Fulness, to roll in the Preferments of the World, but then this is plainly giving up the Honour that comes from God only, and putting far from us everlasting Life. In a word, things are sometimes brought to that Pass, that *he that saves Life shall loose it, and he must loose it who will save it to Life eternal.*

Rev. xii. 11.

Now these Martyrs are enroll'd in the Records of God, as those that *overcame by the Blood of the Lamb, and the Word of their Testimony, and they lov'd not their Lives unto the Death.* Could not they say as much against this as we do against Mysteries? they were not guided in that Submission by Sense, or by Reason. There was something in their Choice very unaccountable to a Carnal Mind. There could be no greater Absurdity to humane Reason than what the

2 Tim. i. 12.

Apostle saith, *though I suffer these Things I am not asham'd.* Every Martyr might have had Arguments enough against his Afflictions, the Ruin of a Family, and loss of Reputation, Health or Life, but he *en-*

Heb. xi. 27.

dur'd as seeing him who is invisible, which sounds like a Contradiction; they *had respect to the Recompence of Reward*, which was all out of Sight: Christ *whom they*

1 Pet. i. 8.

lov'd, they had not seen, and yet *though they saw him not, believing in him, they rejoyc'd with a Joy unspeakable and full of Glory.* His Will concerning them was declar'd in a strange Article; but upon the whole, was it not right for them thus to dye? Has not this Faith given the *Elders a good Report?*

Well,

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Well, theſe were a ſort of practical Myſteries, and ſtand upon the ſame Foundation with thoſe that are Doctrinal, *i. e.* the Revelation of our God. Now, why muſt we ſacrifice every certain Intereſt in this World, our Fame, our Eaſe, our Eſtates and Lives to his *Authority*, and yet reſolve that we will make no Surrenders to his Wiſdom? We do theſe Things becauſe he is our *Maſter*, and is there nothing owing to him as our *Teacher?* 'Tis he that *has put Wiſdom in the inward Parts, and has given Underſtanding to the Heart:* Is the Will to be all at his Service, and the Underſtanding excus'd from Duty? We are ſaid to *comprehend a Love that paſſes Knowledge and to be filled with all the fulneſs of God*; but the Phraſes muſt be expounded with Modeſty, becauſe the God who gives us thoſe Bleſſings is *able to do exceeding abundantly above what we can ask or think*, and he actually does ſo by *the Power that works in us.*

Job xxxviii. 36.

Ep. iii. 18, 19, 20.

You may run the parallel between *Abraham*'s believing that he ſhould be *the Father of many Nations*, and your believing a Doctrine of the Goſpel. A Promiſe and a Myſtery are equally above the Comprehenſion of our Reaſon. I will now make the ſame Compariſon between his Obedience, and our Faith. When he was order'd to leave his Father's Houſe, and go into a Country that God would tell him of, by Faith *he obeyed, and went out not knowing whither he went*; nothing but Faith could make him do it; that was the venturous Principle, that truſted God, relied upon his Word, and was ſatisfy'd in his Providence. It was certainly right in *Abraham* to do what he did. Now, ſuppoſe God had told him any thing that was purely a Doctrine, ſhould not That have had the ſame admiſſion into his Thoughts that the other had into his Practice? This is the Language of a Believer, "Lord I am univerſally thine, "my whole Soul is for thee, and let every Faculty have a ſhare of the Service. As my Will regards

Heb. xi. 8.

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" thy Command, my Understanding does the same " by thy Gospel; what ever thou hast said I must " receive either into my Faith or into my Practice."

Eph. iii. 3. *By Revelation he makes known to us the Mystery.*

5. CONSIDER, these are not Mysteries of Man's forging. Don't suppose that in this Argument, we are stealing away your Reason, or your Liberties, and giving them up to the Controll of others. *We renounce* those *hidden Things of Dishonesty,* and hate to *walk in that Craftiness.* This infamous Practice has made the Name of a Mystery to be abhorr'd.

a Cor. iv. 2.

That monstrous Iniquity of the Papists the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* is such a Bondage upon Humane Nature both in Soul and Body, that I shall ever encourage the Jealousy of the World against humane Impositions, and I long for those better Times when that Jealousy shall burn like Fire, and the Flame fasten upon those that rais'd it; when either Priests will teach nothing but by the Rule, or if they do, that the People will not believe them. 'Tis loading both Sense and Reason with a Burden too heavy for them to bear, when any tell us that here's a Change without an Alteration, or a Creation without a God; that what we taste and see and smell, and feel to be Bread is really Flesh and Blood; that it's both in Earth and Heaven; that it's eaten as a Morsel and ador'd as a Deity; that we swallow what we worship; that it continues the same, and yet is chang'd. These are Contradictions: 'Tis a wrong Way of addressing humane Nature: It makes our Reason and Senses pass for nothing; and it is worse still to call this *a God,* and to suppose that a certain formal Sinner in a fantastical Garb by the muttering of four Words, has it in his Power to work all these Wonders. They call it a Mystery indeed, and so they may; but it is what the Scripture has never given that Name to, unless it be in Disgrace, when it speaks of *a Mystery of Iniquity,* that in the last Times was to be celebrated

ted with *lying Wonders, and with all Deceivableneſs of Unrighteouſneſs in them that periſh.* Now, this is plainly *Art and Man's Device.* The Text they bring for it out of the Bible would never convince any one, if they did not fortify their Interpretations with Fire and Faggot, and take that way of driving Hereticks out of the World, that they may drive Hypocrites into the Church. SERM. IV. 2 Theſ. xi. 9. 10.

But the Doctrines of the Goſpel are of another Kind. If you do not find them in the Bible, you need not be concern'd about them. That which we preach is *the Record that God has given of his Son. We have not followed cunningly deviſed Fables*; but have *a ſure Word of Prophecy to which we do well to take Heed. As we are allow'd of God to be put in Truſt with the Goſpel, ſo we ſpeak.* 1 Joh. v. 10. 2 Pet. i. 16. 19. 2 Theſ. ii. 4.

6. THESE Myſteries are not confin'd to any Party or Tribe, but lye open to the Peruſal of all. *All Men are to ſee what is the Fellowſhip of the Myſtery.* If Miniſters are ſuppos'd to underſtand them better, it is not from any external Character, and much leſs from any Ceremony that is acted upon them, or any Garb and Diſtinction in thoſe that do it. No Illumination goes along with humane Fingers. That God who puts no Truſt in *the Legs of a Man* has as much Contempt of his *Hands.* If theſe have a greater Knowledge of the Doctrine, it is becauſe God has bleſt their Studies. They give *Attendance to Reading and Exhortation*; they are ſuppos'd to *ſearch the Scriptures daily*; and, above all, to depend on the Light that comes from above; for *all their Sufficiency is of God, who makes them able Miniſters of the new Teſtament.* Eph. iii. 9. Pſ. cxlvii. 10. 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6.

The Revelation is as open to you as it is to them. You are to judge of the Doctrines they bring. If they talk of any Myſteries that are not to be found in the Bible, deal with them as you would with old Mens Dreams, and old Wives Fables. Chriſtia-

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nity is no Secret lodg'd with a particular Order. All the Saints *ſhall know the Lord, from the leaſt to the greateſt.* Therefore take nothing upon Truſt, but remember the Place of your laſt Appeal, *to the Law and to the Teſtimony, if they ſpeak not according to this Word, it is becauſe there is no Light in them. Try the Spirits whether they be of God.* If they preach *any other Goſpel* than what is revealed, inſtead of receiving *their Bleſſing*, you may give in *your Curſe. Search the Scriptures daily, whether the Things be ſo, or not.* So that

Heb. viii. 11.

Iſa. viii. 20.

1 Joh. iv. 1.

Gal. i. 8.

Act. xvii. 2.

7. THE preaching of theſe Myſteries is not ſetting up the Tyranny of a Prieſt. I hope I ſhall ever abhor *all that* as the vileſt Abuſe of Chriſtianity, and one of the moſt pernicious Crimes in our Nature. I know not any thing that has done more harm in the World, than for Men to teach and command what they have no Ground for in Scripture. They are *the Light of the World, but if the Light that is in them be Darkneſs, how great is that Darkneſs?*

Here the Caſe is quite otherwiſe. You are not call'd to believe theſe Things becauſe *we* demand it, nor is your Faith to be either paid with Places, or drag'd on with Penalties: You don't believe at a Market-price; There's no Employment either of Craft or Force to ſet home the Myſtery of Godlineſs. Chriſt uſes you as he would have you us'd. Don't ſay, here's a Subjection of your Reaſon, or any Hardſhip offer'd to it. There's the faireſt Propoſal that Man can receive, or God can give; for his Grace *that brings Salvation, has appear'd to all Men.* You're bid to examine theſe Doctrines, to do it impartially; and is there any thing wrong in this? Do not ſay we are impoſing upon you. Your Conſcience knows that is falſe. *Our Goſpel is not of Deceit, nor of Uncleanneſs, nor of Guile.*

Tit. xi. 11.

1 Theſ. ii. 3.

If we bring plain Scripture for any Doctrine, receive it; not for our Sakes, but becauſe it is the Word

Word of Truth, the Language of a *God that cannot lye*; and if we do not, continue your Unbelief, harden your ſelves in it, and reſolve to be unmov'd. But, can you ſay that we ply you with humane Authority? that, what we urge for the Divinity of Chriſt, the Truth of his Satisfaction, the Imputation of his Righteouſneſs, the Infuſion of his Grace, are any of that *vain Converſation, that we have received by Tradition from the Fathers?* Do we pretend to prove this as they do the Croſs in Baptiſm, Kneeling at the Sacrament, or Bowing to the Eaſt? Are they the Decrees of Councils, the Inventions of Synods? Are ſuch pitiful Rags of Authority all that we have to ſay for them? No, *We are manifeſt to God, and I truſt are alſo manifeſt to your Conſciences*, and therefore uſe us as *good Stewards of the manifold Grace of God: It is requir'd of a Steward that a Man be found faithful.* Examine *that*, and truſt us no farther than we prove every Opinion. Your Faith is not owing to us, we come to beg it for our God.

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1 Pet. i. 18.

2 Cor. iii. 3.

1 Cor. vi. 1, 2.

I ſhould now have gone into the third general Head, which is to ſhow you the *Uſefulneſs* of Myſteries in Religion, or what good they do there; In anſwer to that Queſtion, why would God ſuffer any thing of this Nature in Chriſtianity? but I am aware that would fill up more Time than is now left me; I will therefore enter upon ſomething that's equal to the few Minutes that remain, and that is an APPLICATION of what you have heard.

Is it not ſtrange that any ſhould diſpute, whether Chriſtianity is Myſterious or no? The Text ſays *it is* as plainly as any thing can be ſaid, and that it is ſo *without Controverſy*, and ſhall we have a Controverſy whether it be ſo or no? This is a Contradiction to the whole Language of Scripture, an Affront upon the Experience of God's People in every Age; It tends to the Ruin of practical Religion, and *it increaſes to more and more Ungodlineſs.*

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1. THIS contradicts the whole Language of Scripture. If there are no Myſteries in Chriſtianity, why ſhould the Word be ſo often rung in our Ears? Why does God uſe a Phraſe that has no meaning, and beſtow a vain Pomp upon his Doctrines, rather to confound us than to make us wiſer? Why have we any other than *Words of Truth and Soberneſs?* When we read of *the deep Things of God*, of *the Wiſdom of God in a Myſtery, and the hidden Wiſdom that was ordain'd before the World unto our Glory*; when we are told that theſe are *things that the natural Man receives not, that they are only ſpiritually diſcerned, that they are hid from the Wiſe and Prudent*; that they are *the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt*; are all theſe only great ſwelling Words of Vanity? Sounds unfill'd? or is there a Senſe going along with them in Proportion to the Majeſty which they bear?

1 Cor. ii. 4. 5.

What can we ſuppoſe that the great God is talking of, when he takes Expreſſions that are out of the way, and never us'd on any other Occaſion? He tells us of a Myſtery manifeſt to the Saints; he calls it *the Riches of the Glory of this Myſtery:* He directs us to an *Acknowledgement* of the Myſtery, and ſaith that in Chriſt are *hid all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge.* Is this no more than a Flouriſh of Words over a Doctrine that was plain, and might have been known without a Revelation? How unworthy is ſuch a Reflection, of his Purity, how unworthy of his Goodneſs? He is not capable of that Character in himſelf, and he has never deſerv'd it from you. Look into your Bibles; call Things by the Names that are given them there. Stand to that Language; it will do, when the Froth and Laughter of Fools are diſſolved and confounded. Remember who it is that has told you of *the Fellowſhip of the Myſtery, that from the Beginning of the World has been hid in God, and that to the Church is made known the manifold*

Eph. iii. 9. 10.

Wiſdom

Wiſdom of God. And if any one tells you otherwiſe, the Deciſion of the Caſe is very eaſy; *Let God be true, and every Man a Liar. He is to be juſtify'd in his* SAYINGS, *and to overcome when he is judged.* SERM. IV. Rom. iii. 4.

2. THIS Opinion, that there are no Myſteries in Religion, is an Affront upon all the Experience of God's People in every Age. I own as readily as you would have me, that no Thoughts, no Senſations of the good Men that have gone before me ought to be the Rule of my Thinking and Taſting: Faith and Feeling are Perſonal. But yet, ſome Regard ſhould be had to the Generation of God's Children; not to offend againſt them, or to entertain a Notion that all of them have been in a Miſtake. We'll ſuppoſe that *ſome* of them were weak, and not able to comprehend what you do, but are *all* of them ſo? *Art thou the firſt Man that was born, or waſt thou made before the Hills? Doſt thou reſtrain the Secret of God to thy Self? What knoweſt thou that others knew not?* Job xv. 7 8.

The Apoſtle when he ſpeaks but of one Myſtery that you find in this Chain (*viz.* preaching the Goſpel to the Gentiles,) or rather of a Circumſtance belonging to it, the cutting off of the Jews, and their Reſtoration again, he's loſt in the Subject, *O the depth of the Riches, both of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God! How unſearchable are his Judgments, and his ways paſt finding out! Who has known the Mind of the Lord, or who has been his Councellor? for of him and to him and through him are all Things.* What need was there of this Excurſion, if the Doctrine contained no Wonder in it? Why ſhould he uſe that Vehemence of Language, if there was no Occaſion for it? And as it was with him, ſo it has been with all thoſe who have obtained the like precious Faith. They have look'd into the Book of God: they have thought the Revelation ſufficient for their Faith, but the *Matter* of it above their Reaſon. This they have confeſs'd, and (which is the beſt way of owning it) Rom. xi. 33, 34. 36.

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it has made them earneſt for heavenly Directions; they have reach'd after more Light with Prayer and Fervour; their Enquiries have run out into Adorations. This has been the Practice of thoſe who *walked humbly with their God*, and were upright before him in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe Generation; with theſe Thoughts they liv'd, and with the Comforts that flow'd from them they dy'd. The Opinion always ſunk them in their own Eyes, made them uſeful to the World whilſt they knew it, and eaſy to be gone when they were call'd to leave it.

Now, what have we in Ballance to *their* Character in thoſe who would lead us aſide from the Doctrines which they taught and believ'd? This was the Profeſſion of our Fathers who *through Faith and Patience do now inherit the Promiſes*. *Paul* we know, *Peter* we know, what they ſaid and apprehended we can tell, but *who are theſe*, that are for beating all down again? What's the Language of this new Opinion? Put it with the greateſt Modeſty you can, and it muſt run to this Purpoſe. "Alas! good Men! they are miſtaken. There's no Myſtery in what they admired, no Truth in many Things which they believed. Their Devotion upon theſe Heads might all have been ſpar'd; the God they ſerv'd kept 'em in the Dark both living and dying, but WE ſee into the ſtrong Deluſion, and are deliver'd from the *Enthuſiaſm* of former Ages." And who are this ſett of Men, whom God has taught at a better rate than ever he did his Prophets, his Martyrs, his humble faithful People, in the ſeveral Ages of the World? What is there in them that ſhows a greater Illumination? Or, why muſt we, in Compliment to them, throw a Slur upon the *Cloud of Witneſſes* that have gone before us? I do not love to make invidious Compariſons, and will therefore only ſay of the one ſort and the other, *You know the Men and their Communications*.

3. THIS

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3. THIS tends to the Ruin of practical Religion: When People are *corrupted from the Simplicity of the Goſpel*, when they lay aſide the Truth as it is in Jeſus, 'tis foretold, and it may be obſerv'd, that this will *increaſe to more and more Ungodlineſs*. And the Reaſon is plain, why it ſhould do ſo; If once there is a Refuſal to admit any thing upon a divine Teſtimony, it deſtroys a Confidence in God. If we cannot truſt his Word for a Doctrine, we cannot truſt it for a Promiſe. It throws us into our Selves, we are *alienated from the Life of God*, can neither live to him in Duty, nor live with him in Communion, *through the Darkneſs that is in us:* This makes us *caſt off Fear and reſtrain Prayer before him.*

2 Tim. ii. 16.

Job xv. 4.

Theſe are Myſteries of Godlineſs. Godlineſs flows from them, and is maintained by them. We read of ſome who *ſpeak great ſwelling Words of Vanity, and allure through the Luſts of the Fleſh and much Wantonneſs, thoſe who were clean eſcaped from them that live in Error: Whilſt they promiſe them Liberty, they themſelves are the Servants of Corruption.* Corruption brings Error, and Error brings *that. The Time ſhall come that they will not endure ſound Doctrine, but after their own Luſts ſhall heap to themſelves Teachers having itching Ears*; and ſo *they ſhall be turned away from the Truth, and be turned unto Fables.* You will have Men drink, and ſwear, and commit Iniquity with Greedineſs, and in that Filth be zealous againſt the Doctrines of the Goſpel: as if any Character was good enough for thoſe that *oppoſe* Chriſtianity, though we know what manner of Perſons they ſhould be who *maintain* it. He who refuſes a Myſtery becauſe he cannot underſtand it, will be as ready to ſlight a Precept becauſe he does not like it. And, indeed, I fear, it is from a hatred of practical Godlineſs that many run into ſtrange Opinions. It is a ſort of a Bauble to the Conſcience. Something for it to play with, and divert it ſelf by.

2 Pet. ii. 18. 19.

2 Tim. iv 3, 4.

4. THIS

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4. THIS will increaſe to more Error. And there are two Reaſons to be given for it. *Firſt*, The natural Tendency of that Principle; and, *Secondly*, the judicial Reſentment of God. He gives them up to *walk after their own Luſts*. He leaves them to *ſtrong Deluſions*, to *vile Affections*, to a *reprobate Mind*; *Evil Men and Seducers ſhall wax worſe and worſe, deceiving and being deceiv'd*. Therefore, do you *continue in the Things that you have learned*. If once a Perſon has any Objection againſt a Divine Teſtimony he can ſtick at nothing. He is looſe, and open to *every Wind of Doctrine;* He is driven from his Anchor; He has no Hold; nothing to keep him firm and ſteddy. From rejecting one Point of Scripture we naturally go on to ſtrike at the whole Foundation. And when we come that length, to think that God has given us no Rule for our Faith and Practice, there is nothing ſo fooliſh and impious in the Religion of the Heathen, but we may tumble into it. Theſe are ſome of the Conſequences of denying that *Chriſtianity is Myſterious*.

Pſ. lxxxi. 12.
2 Theſ. ii. 11.
Rom. i. 26. 28.
2 Tim. iii. 13, 14.

June 8. 1718.

SERMON V.

III.

WHAT is the BENEFIT of having Myſteries in the Chriſtian Religion? Why could not our Law-giver have done, as others did, only laid before us a ſett of Rules, and diſtributed them under the ſeveral Heads of Practice, without ever engaging our Faith in any Speculations at all?

I ſuppoſe,

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I ſuppoſe, you are no Strangers to the Objection that's form'd upon this Head, and in how triumphant a manner ſome Perſons have talk'd it, as if they were ſure of deſtroying the Foundation that God has laid in *Sion*, and making *him* a ſecond time to be *deſpis'd of the Builders*, whom infinite Wiſdom has appointed to be *the Head of the Corner*. Upon this we have had a run againſt the Religion of the Goſpel. They have turn'd its *Glory into Shame*, and taken Occaſion to laugh at it for the ſake of thoſe Doctrines that diſtinguiſh it above all others. We have this Account from the Apoſtle, that he was call'd *to preach the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt, to make all Men ſee, what is the Fellowſhip of the Myſtery, the manifold Wiſdom of God.* Eph. iii. 8, 9.

That Chriſtianity has deliver'd to us the beſt Rules of Life, that all the Morality of the Heathen falls ſhort of the Directions we meet with here, that *the Grace of God which brings Salvation teaches us to deny Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent World,* is what we may affirm. And though the Proof of it would be a large Work, yet really 'tis a very eaſy one. There needs no more, in order to it, than opening many Branches of Duty, and comparing what the Goſpel ſaith upon theſe Heads, with the Leſſons of Philoſophers. The Diſpenſations they were under are ſaid to be *Times of Ignorance*, but ours is a *Heavenly Viſion*, it calls Men to repent and turn to God, and do things meet for Repentance. Tit. ii. 11, 12.

But then, the Queſtion is, why there's any thing more in Religion than Commandments? Why, in a Life of Duty, there muſt be a *looking for that bleſſed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of our great God and Saviour?* and why we ought to conſider him as having *given himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify to himſelf a peculiar People that are zealous of good Works?* ver. 4.

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In answer to this, I would, first, lay down my Assertion, and then maintain it. I do therefore, without any recoil, affirm, that the Mysteries which God has revealed in the Gospel are the Glory of that Dispensation: That, the Rules of Duty had been imperfect without them: That, they are suited to all the Work of Grace in our Hearts, and all its Employment in our Lives: That, we could not have known *what is good, in doing Justice, loving Mercy, and walking humbly with our God*, had he not shown it to us in this Light. These Doctrines are so far from being unconcern'd with Practice, that the whole is *a Mystery of Godliness*.

How well they are plac'd in our Religion you will see by the following Particulars; 1. We are thus led to an Esteem for the Salvation it self that infinite Wisdom has contriv'd: 2. We have the best Arguments for our Duty from the Incarnation, Satisfaction and Resurrection of Jesus Christ: 3. We have the noblest Example of all practical Holiness from God's being manifest in the Flesh: 4. We are inclin'd and encourag'd to the Duty of Prayer by this new and living Way that is consecrated for us: 5. We have the greatest Hopes of succeeding in the whole Course of our Duty from the Method of Redemption that is now Establish'd: 6. We have the Principles of all Practical Religion enlarg'd and refresh'd by the Mysteries that are laid before us: 7. We are made low in our own Eyes, because of the Ignorance that is in us: 8. We see the Necessity of depending upon the Spirit for Illumination: 9. We are taught a greater Value for the Revelation God has given of himself: And 10. it draws out our Desires after Heaven, where those Things are no longer to be known through a Glass darkly, but in God's own Light we shall see their Light.

Of this Advantage are the Mysteries of Godliness, without 'em these noble Ends could not have been answer'd.

ſwer'd. The beſt Rules of Life muſt have loſt their Deſign, and lain waſte in the Book of God. We have *the Knowledge of Salvation by the Remiſſion of Sins, thro' the tender Mercy of our God; the Day-ſpring that viſits us from on high, gives Light to thoſe that ſit in Darkneſs, and guides their Feet into the Way of Peace.* When *the Law is eſtabliſh'd by Faith*, it gets a Firmneſs and an Influence that it could never have had any other way. SERM. V. Luk. i. 77, 78, 79. Rom. iii. 31.

1. By the Myſteries of the Goſpel we are led to an Eſteem for the Salvation it ſelf that God has given us, becau'e thus we ſee it was the Contrivance of infinite Wiſdom. The *Faith of God's Elect*, and *the acknowledging of the Myſtery which is after Godlineſs*, are *in hope of eternal Life, which God has manifeſted through the Preaching that is committed* to his Miniſters. There's more of the Divine Love to be admir'd in the ſecond Covenant, than there was in the firſt. *Adam*'s Religion, as far as we know it, was, *That the Man who does thoſe Things ſhall live by them.* And in that Diſpenſation he was to adore the Goodneſs of his Maker, who ſuffer'd himſelf to be ſought unto, and viſited by the Work of his own Hands. Tit. i. 2, 3. Rom. x. 5.

But the Recovery of this Happineſs when it was loſt, is a Thing more out of the way. There's a Compaſs to be taken in the Contrivance. The Law was included in a ſhort Revelation, obey God's Authority, and thou ſhalt have his Favour; there was no more for God to do than to make known his Will. But when Juſtice had been provok'd, and Goodneſs abus'd, in order to give Mercy a new Courſe for its Glory, there are Methods to be found out, Oppoſitions removed, an incenſed Nature muſt be reconcil'd, a polluted one reſtor'd. And therefore when *the Love and Kindneſs of God towards Man now appears*, it looks otherwiſe than it did in Paradiſe. The Revelation brings along with it more Beneficence, in that it is *not by Works of Righteouſneſs that we have done, but according to his Mercy that he ſaves* Tit. iii. 4, 5, 6.

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us by washing of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Here's Pains to be taken: Here's a Change to be wrought: This Work *he sheds on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.*

Our first Parents would have valued any Manifestation that God made of himself to them. When they heard his Voice in the cool of the Day, it might have chear'd their Souls, though they had done nothing to lose his Favour. But what's this to the Discoveries that are now sent among a lost Race!

Ps. viii. 4. *What is Man,* since the Fall, *that God is mindful of him, and the Son of Man that he now visits him!* The Salvation that we should have deserv'd in Paradise must have been paid in as the Wages of Duty; but to be saved by the Manifestation of a God in the Flesh, by his bringing in *an everlasting Righteousness*; to be made happy at his Expence as a High Priest, and by his Virtue as a King, those are new Endear-

Rom. x. 4. ments to the Favour. *Christ is the end of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believes.* It represents our Happiness *as bought with a Price*; we must value it, not only for what it's worth, but for what it actually cost, *the precious Blood of the Son of God, as*

1 Pet. i. 19. *a Lamb without Blemish, and without Spot.*

When our Saviour tells the Person who was *willing to justify himself, this do and thou shalt live,* he does not only put him upon a Thing impossible, but in that Scheme he hides the Glory of Divine Mercy. Could we do that by which we may live, there would be little room to admire the Goodness of God, and much less to adore his Wisdom. Salvation had come cheap; we had made it our Selves: but when we are told, in order to it, there's an old Guilt to be done away, and a new Nature to be implanted, it shows that an infinite Mind must have been at work about it.

2 Cor. v. 19. *The Word of Reconciliation,* that he has committed to us, is *That God is in Christ Jesus reconciling the World*

World unto himſelf, not imputing their Treſpaſſes to them. SERM. V.
This is a great deal more than he needed to have ſaid to *Adam*. There was then nothing but a continuing the Communion in which he was plac'd at firſt: But now, here's *Firſt*, a *Reconciling us to himſelf*. And therefore, *Secondly*, He would have bleſſed our firſt Parents without a Mediator, us'd them as he did the Angels; they might have come at once to his Throne; but now there is a middle Perſon between God and Man, it is *in Chriſt Jeſus* that he reconciles them. And how is it? but, *Thirdly*, In a way that our firſt Parents had no occaſion for, and that is by *not imputing their Treſpaſſes to them*: They wanted no Pardon. But we are to be conſider'd as innocent, though we are guilty; and as not doing the many things that we have done. Now, by what Method, or upon what Foundation does he pronounce thoſe to be righteous whom he knows to be ſinful? *Fourthly*, *He makes him to be Sin for us, who knew no Sin, that we may be made the Righteouſneſs of God in him.* So that here's a new way to Happineſs, which would never have been known, had our Nature continu'd in it's primitive Purity.

O! What a Salvation is this, that comes from ſomething elſe beſides the Equity of the Legiſlator! What a Friend is our God who would not only have rewarded the Righteouſneſs of our Works, but has employ'd himſelf upon a Scheme that imputes to us *Righteouſneſs without Works!* we who were *afar off* Eph. ii. 14. *are made nigh by the Blood of Chriſt, for he is our Peace. He is our Hope.* Our way is *through the Vail,* 1 Tim. i. 1. *that is, his Fleſh.* Is not this *a faithful Saying, and* Heb. x. 20. *worthy of all Acceptation? Sing aloud, ye waſte Places of* Iſa. lii 9, *the Earth, the Lord has comforted his People, and made* 10. *bare his holy Arm.* Look upon your Happineſs as a Thing projected by infinite Wiſdom. Declare the Decree. 'Tis the *Purpoſe that he purpos'd in himſelf.* You now *lay hold on eternal Life which God that cannot lye*

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promiſed before the World began. See your Portion in Heaven, not as a Thing that grew out of your Duties, as the Fruit of an imperfect Religion here, but as a Contrivance that was laid in one Eternity, and ſhall be perform'd in another. Your Holineſs is not the Root of the Scheme, but one of the Branches. *God has from the beginning choſen us to Salvation thro' Sanctification of the Spirit, and Belief of the Truth.* This the Apoſtle admires, tho' he liv'd a long while before he felt the Deſign, *when it pleaſed God who ſeparated him from his Mother's Womb to reveal his Son in him.* He has choſen his People to be *rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom that he promis'd to thoſe that love him.*

2 Theſ. ii. 13.

Gal. i. 15. 16.

Jam. ii. 5.

2. WE have the beſt Arguments for our Duty from the Incarnation, Satisfaction and Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt. *God has appointed us to obtain Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt, who died for us, that whether we wake or ſleep, we ſhould live together with him.* Theſe are Things People object againſt. A God manifeſt in the Fleſh is call'd Nonſenſe, an Innocent Perſon's Suffering for the Guilty is an Injuſtice, and a Dead Man's riſing again is an Impoſſibility. I anſwer, upon their Principles, that if theſe Things had been told us by any other than God himſelf, we might have join'd with them in a determin'd Infidelity. We could never have believ'd any of 'em upon leſs than a Divine Evidence. Theſe Myſteries would have born all the hard Names that they give 'em, if we had receiv'd 'em any other way than by the Revelation of a God that cannot lie. But, if they are true, as every thing that he ſays muſt be, do but ſee what Good they do to the practical Part of Religion.

Rom xvi. 25, 26.

We are *eſtabliſh'd by this Goſpel, and the preaching of Jeſus Chriſt, and the Revelation of the Myſtery which is made manifeſt to all Nations for the Obedience of Faith.* They that talk ſo much of Morality, can, in no Stories, give us thoſe Examples of it that we have in the Bible. What Acts of Juſtice and Mercy

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do we find in the Lives of the Apoſtles? They could truly ſay, with an Appeal to the whole World, *We have wrong'd no Man, we have defrauded no Man.* But beſides that, what Pains did they take? What Dangers did they run, in diffuſing the Goſpel? and, why was all this? Could they not have made as great a Figure without it? Yes, but it's evident they were Friends to the World, enlarg'd with Pity to their whole Nature; and therefore carried about with them what they thought was the way for Mankind to be happy. What was it that put them upon this, but one of the Myſteries that are recorded in my Text? *The Love of Chriſt conſtrains us, becauſe we thus judge, that if one dy'd for all, then were all dead; and that he dyed, that they that live ſhould not live to themſelves, but to him that dyed for them and roſe again.* You ſee here how they argue from the Story of a Saviour in its ſeveral Branches. SERM. V. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

The firſt Principle is, that Chriſt *lov'd* them. And the very Thoughts of that threw them into a ſort of Convulſion; they are drawn and conſtrain'd by it, to make all their Lives a Tribute to him: This was not a Spirit of Enthuſiaſm, or a fanatical Vapour, but what they deduc'd in a Vein of cool and genuine reaſoning: *We thus judge, that if one dyed for all, then were all dead.* This Love of his ſhows them what they were in themſelves, impotent, unhappy; under a Sentence and preparing for an Execution. What a Reach of Mercy was this? He dy'd *that they who live ſhould not live to themſelves*; the Argument is very good, for they did not live *by* themſelves; without him they had not liv'd at all; *but to him that dy'd for them*, to deſerve their Duty, *and roſe again* to employ it. συνέχει.

What is there like this in any other Collection of Precepts? How ſhould we have had this Fire of the Altar, theſe Principles of zeal to our Duty, if Religion had contain'd none of the Myſteries that are

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mention'd? All our Holiness is thrown into this sort of Language, *We are baptiz'd into Christ Jesus, baptiz'd into his Death*; we are *bury'd with him by Baptism into Death*; and *as Christ was rais'd up from the Dead by the Glory of the Father, so we are to walk in Newness of Life. Our old Man is crucify'd with him, that the Body of Sin may be destroy'd.* The meaning of all these Phrases we have afterwards, *Sin shall not have Dominion over you*, and the Reason why it shall not, is, *because you are not under the Law, but under Grace.* Suppose God had told us all that he has now said about our Obedience, and given us none of these Arguments, what would the Consequence of that have been? Only making this World to be one of the Outer-rooms of Hell, where a sett of Creatures liv'd, who were taught indeed but not perswaded. Whereas the great Work of Grace is not only to make us a Knowing, but a *Willing, People in the Day of his Power.* Religion indeed has always been a Tribute to him that made us. *He has made us and not we our selves* is an universal Argument; but we find from all Experience that it will not do. 'Tis not the common Character of our Nature that the Apostle lays down. *No Man of us lives to himself, and no Man dies to himself.* It's what every one ought to say, that *if we live, we live unto the Lord.* But how comes it to be so with them in Fact? They know, *that to this End Christ both dy'd and rose again and reviv'd, that he might be the Lord both of dead and living.*

Rom. vi. 3. 4. 6.

Ps. cx. 3.

Rom. xiv. 7, 8, 9.

3. WE have the noblest Example of all practical Holiness from God's being manifest in the Flesh. As he taught the Law without the Darkness in which others had involv'd it, so he show'd it without any Corruption in his Life. *He did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth.* Hence he stands as the great Pattern; *be you Followers of me*, saith the Apostle, *as I am of Christ:* Now, this had never been,

1 Pet. ii. 22.

1 Cor. xi. 1

if

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if he had not come down into the Fleſh, and dwelt amongſt us.

We are bid to be *followers of him as dear Children.* Eph. v. 1. The Scripture has all along in the ſeveral Parts of Duty directed us hither. Thus when we are call'd to Humility, 'tis in the brighteſt view of that Grace and Practice; *let the ſame Mind be in you that was in Chriſt Jeſus, who* Phil. ii. 5, *being in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be* 6, 7. *equal with God, took on him the form of a Servant.* As an Evidence of this Principle we are to be patient, and to endure the Diſorders of thoſe to whom the Grace of God has been more ſparing. *We that are ſtrong are to* Rom. xv. *bear the Infirmities of the weak, and not to pleaſe ourſelves.* 1, 3. Why ſo? *Becauſe Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf.* This is what he argued in his own Perſon, *let him that will be great among you be the Servant of all, even as the Son of Man came not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter: I am among you as one that ſerves.* Thus, when we are employ'd about that neceſſary Work of forgiving Injuries, whether there are Reaſons for it in Nature, I ſhall not now examine, but I'm very ſure the beſt of 'em muſt be fetch'd from Revelation. *We put on, as the E-* Col. iii, 12, *lect of God, holy and beloved, Bowels of Mercy, Humbleneſs of Mind, Meekneſs and long-ſuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as God has for Chriſt's ſake forgiven you.* When we are exhorted to a gentle, eaſy, quiet Carriage, we *learn* it of him who *is meek and lowly*, and ſo *find reſt to our* Mat. xi. 29. *Souls.* Our Charity to thoſe in Trouble looks to him as the great Example. *Ye know the Grace of our Lord* 2 Cor. viii, *Jeſus Chriſt, that though he was rich, yet for your* 9. *ſakes he became poor, that ye through his Poverty may be made rich. If he our Lord and Maſter waſh'd their Feet,* they ought to waſh one anothers. *He has gi-* Joh. xiii. *ven an Example, and we ſhould do as he has done;* and 14, 15, 16, how ſtrong is the Motive? *the Servant is not greater than his Lord, nor he that is ſent, greater than he that ſent him.*

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Don't say these Rules were sufficient without Examples; that's talking against all the Experience of our Nature. 'Tis not in vain that we are *compass'd about with a great Cloud of Witnesses*, but we look off from them, or rather look up above them, to *Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith: We consider him who endur'd the Contradiction of Sinners against himself, lest we be weary and faint in our Minds.* Our Religion is form'd in Similitude to him; *both he that sanctifies, and they that are sanctified are all of one, wherefore he is not ashamed to call them Brethren.* And it is practis'd in walking after him; *If any Man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am, there shall my Servant be.* There's a Peace that flows into us, not only from our keeping the Directions, but agreeing with the Example that is set before us: *Herein we have Boldness in the Day of Judgment, that as he was, so we are in the World.* What would have become of all this, if God was not manifest in the Flesh?

Heb. xii. 1, 2, 3. ἀφορῶντες. Heb. ii. 11. Joh. xii. 26. 1 Joh. iv. 17.

4. WE are in particular inclin'd and encourag'd to the Duty of Prayer, by this *new and living way that is consecrated for us through the Vail, that is to say, his Flesh.* This is the main Employment of Religion, and whatever helps it on must be of the greatest value to our Character and our Peace. We'll suppose that in all Nations there are some crying to him that made them. *They feel after him, if haply they may find him, for he is not far from any one of us.* Prayer is a Confession of Sin, a begging for Pardon, and any other Mercy that we want, and a Gratitude for those that we either have or hope for. But how heavily would this Work have gone on, if there had been none of these Mysteries in Religion?

Heb. x. 20. Acts xvii. 27.

In what manner must you have confess'd your Sins, if God himself had not given you *Boldness to enter into the Holiest of all by the Blood of Jesus?* What's the Difference between the Howlings of Conscience

Heb. x 19.

ſcience here, and that in Hell, if there's no Regard to pardoning Love? 'Tis upon this Ground that *he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our Sins, and cleanſe us from all Unrighteouſneſs.* We can only ſay this from a Belief that there is *a Blood of Sprinkling ſpeaking better Things than the Blood of* Abel. SERM. V. 1 Joh. i. 9. Heb. xii. 24.

'Tis true, we may tell God our wants, but what hope have we of being ſupply'd? Strip the Duty of Prayer of all its relation to the Doctrines of the Goſpel, and you take away its Arguments. *The Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God.* 'Tis becauſe *Jeſus, the great Shepherd of the Sheep is paſſed into the Heavens, that we come boldly to the Throne of Grace, in hope of obtaining Mercy and finding Grace to help in every Time of need. We have an high Prieſt over the Houſe of God, and therefore draw near with a true Heart, and a full Aſſurance of Faith.* There's no *coming to the Father but by him, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.* Prayer had been a heartleſs and helpleſs Work, if it was not for this Proviſion: But now *we have Boldneſs of Acceſs with Confidence through the Faith of him. If any Man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous.* Heb. vii. 19. iv. 14. 16. x. 21, 22. Joh. xiv. 6. Eph. iii. 12. 1 Joh. ii. 1.

5. We have the beſt Hope of ſucceeding in the whole Work of our Duty from the Redemption that is now eſtabliſh'd. The Ground of all Religion is laid in this, that *they who by a patient Continuance in well doing, ſeek for Honour, Glory and Immortality,* ſhall have *eternal Life.* That *they who do good ſhall come to the Reſurrection of Life, and they that do evil, to the Reſurrection of Damnation.* But from whence have you any Encouragement this way, if you throw out the Promiſes of the Goſpel, and the Myſteries upon which they are founded? Rom. ii. 7. Joh. v. 29.

Suppoſe I was to argue with a polite Heathen, and ask him why he does ſo much Good in the

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World? he will answer, It is in hopes of a future Reward. Well, but how does he know this? I take it for granted, he will argue from God's Justice; that *he renders to every Man according to his Works.* Thus far 'tis very well, but the main Difficulty is yet to come. He cannot but find himself a Sinner, there's a great deal of his Duty that he has not done; and if the Justice of God rewards what is good, it must lay him under an equal Necessity to punish what is bad. If indeed I were pure and spotless, *I might lift up my Face before him,* but as it is not so, what is to become of me now?

To say that God will pardon, is really talking at random, out of the Gospel; that he will do so is true, but that's more than either they or any one else can know without a Revelation. If a Priest should assure them that their *Works* deserve eternal Life, yet he leaves an awaken'd Conscience uneasy, if he cannot tell them what becomes of their *Sins.*

Now, 'tis from the Satisfaction made by Christ that we see how our Happiness consists with all the Glory of God. That if we confess our Sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us. In this Dispensation there's no room for Despair from the Greatness, the Multitude, and Aggravation of our Iniquities.

Isa. i. 18. If our Sins *be as Scarlet, they shall be white as Snow; if they be red like Crimson, they shall be as Wool.* Our

—lv. 7. God will not only *have Mercy, but abundantly pardon.* The Heathen Religion, in the loosest way of teaching it, suppos'd a Merit in their good Works, to deserve a Reward for themselves, and a Pardon for their Vices. But this would only give Hope to the best among them. There's nothing in their way of thinking like Salvation to *the Chief of Sinners.* That we must know from the Gospel, that *with our*

Ps. cxxx. 7, 8. *God is plenteous, Redemption, and he shall redeem* Israel *from all his Iniquities.*

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6. By theſe Myſteries the Principles of all practical Religion are enlarg'd and encourag'd. 'Tis in a Meditation upon theſe that we *ſtir up the Grace of God that is in us.* We are *therefore ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, and always abounding in the Work of God,* as *we know that our Labour is not in vain in the Lord.* The Apoſtle argues this from the Reſurrection of the dead in a very long Chapter. From hence he concludes that we ought to be *ſteddy* in the Ways of God; nay, to *abound* in 'em, to do every thing better, be daily throwing more Life and Virtue into all our Duties. And thus we find it is in fact. We grow languid and dull, when our Thoughts withdraw themſelves from the great Doctrines of Chriſtianity. When *Peter* had mention'd the *Sufferings of Chriſt and the Glory that ſhould follow,* he ſays in this View, we muſt *gird up the Loins of our Minds, and be ſober and hope until the End.* 'Tis an Alluſion either to Travellers or Racers, that put themſelves into a Poſture for all the length of their Journey, and all the Toil of their Courſe; and in that we are not only doing our Duty, but we *wait for the Grace that is to be brought to us at the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt:* Either the Revelation we ſhall have *of him,* or the Revelation we ſhall have *by him:* Either the Grace that he ſhews in himſelf, or the Grace that he brings to his People.

1 Cor. xv. 5, 8.

1 Pet. i. 11, 13.

7. We are by this means kept low in our own Eyes; as we find there are things above the Reach of Nature, and beyond the Comprehenſion of Faith. There's nothing we are apt to be more proud of than our Knowledge. *Vain Man would be wiſe.* We had rather be diſtinguiſh'd by what we *know,* than by what we *do.* This was the primitive Wickedneſs of our Nature. Our firſt Parents wanted nothing to make them more holy, that was not their Temptation; but they *ſaw the Tree was deſirable to make one wiſe.*

Now *God makes it manifeſt to the Sons of Men, they ſee that themſelves are Beaſts. He deſtroys the Wiſdom of the wiſe, and brings to nought the Underſtanding of the prudent:*

Eccl. iii. 18.

1 Cor. i. 19, 20, 21.

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dent: And in the work of Redemption we may say *Where is the Wise, where is the Scribe, where is the Disputer of this World? Has not God made foolish the Wisdom of this World? For, after that in the Wisdom of God, the World thro' Wisdom knew not God,* (either their Wisdom was insufficient or opposite to that Knowledge) *it pleased God by the Foolishness of Preaching to save them that believe. The Wisdom of this World is Foolishness with God.*

1 Cor. iii. 19.

It is easy to see what would have been the Effect of having no Mysteries in Religion. We may imagine *that,* from the Temper of the Men who say there are none. For *the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish Foolishness.* The Scorn which they pour out upon others, *the cruel Mockings* which they deal abroad among the People of God, against the Faith once deliver'd to the Saints, is an Argument that the Religion they despise was contriv'd on purpose *to hide Pride from Man.* To those that look aright into it, it does so. If a Person talk in a diminutive Way of the mighty Ocean, and, because he has never seen it, imagine it was only like a large River, but that he could easily conceive where it begun, and where it ended; the best way would be to send him to Sea, and when he has been some time without sight of Land, he will learn to think and speak after another manner. Just so it is here; what a Sinner knows nothing at all of he can easily explain, but when the Grace of God gives him the Knowledge of the Truth, with that he finds his own Ignorance: The further he goes, the deeper it is. Like the Bow of the Sky that we imagine touches the Hill where it closes the Sight, but when we come there 'tis as far off as before. We cannot suppose ourselves to have *apprehended, but this one thing we do, forget what is behind, and reach to those things that are before.*

Phil. iii. 13.

8. THIS shews us the Necessity of depending upon the Spirit for Illumination, as well as upon Christ for Acceptance. We should never enquire after this Light, if

if there were not *deep things of God.* But this makes it the continual Employment of a Chriſtian to call in Diſcoveries from above, that he may *apprehend that for which he is apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus. We receive not the Spirit of the World, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God.* This is the great Bleſſing, for which the Apoſtle ceaſed not to make mention in his Prayers, *that the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt might give 'em the Spirit of Wiſdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of him. For this Cauſe he bow'd his Knees to the Father of our Lord Jeſus, that he would grant, according to the Riches of his Glory, that they might comprehend with all Saints, what is the Breadth and Length and Depth and Height.*

1 Cor. ii. 12. Eph. i. 16, 17. Ch. iii. 14, 16, 18.

9. THIS teaches a greater Value for the Revelation God has made of himſelf. The Bible contains indeed the plaineſt Rules of Duty, for which we admire it; but there alſo we have the *Wiſdom of God in a Myſtery.* And if theſe are things that we know but in part, how much ſhould we have been in the dark, had God ſaid nothing at all about 'em? 'Tis a low jeſt, when we are laught at for admiring what we do not underſtand, and the Retortion is but juſt upon the People that make it, that if this is their Principle, we may conclude it's *very little* that they admire. For our parts, we read and adore, we ſee but thro' a Glaſs darkly; and we may ſay to one of them as *Elihu* did to a wiſer Man, *Hearken unto this, O Job, ſtand ſtill and conſider the wondrous Works of God: Doſt thou know when God diſpoſed em, and caus'd the Light of his Cloud to ſhine? — Teach us what we ſhall ſay to him, for we cannot order our Speech by reaſon of Darkneſs.*

Job xxxvii. 14, 15, 19.

10. THIS draws out our Deſires towards Heaven; without which there can be neither the Purity nor the Comfort of Religion. We long to be where the Veil is taken off from the Object, and the Fetters from the Faculty. *We know in part, and propheſy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part ſhall be done*

1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10, 12.

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done away; now we see thro' a Glass darkly, but then Face to Face. It does not appear what we shall be, but when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

1 Joh. iii. 2.

June 22. 1718.

SERMON VI.

BESIDES the Title of Mystery that is given to the Christian Religion, there are two Words more in this Verse. *1st*, That it is a *great* Mystery. *2dly*, That it is so *without Controversy*. These are what I shall now enquire into, as they lead us to farther Views of that Doctrine which God has made to be the Glory of the best Dispensation that ever his People came under: The Report we have of him who has *appear'd to abolish Death, and bring Life and Immortality to light by the Gospel.*

2 Tim. i. 10.

[1.] WHEN the Apostle calls this a GREAT *Mystery*, I suppose he does it in a Way of Pre-eminence to what is contain'd in other Religions, more especially these two:

First, The Mysteries of the *Heathen*. These made a mighty Noise in the World. In particular the *Eleusinian* Mysteries which were taught at *Ephesus*. To these no Persons were admitted till they had been train'd up five or seven Years in a Way of Preparation for them. They were so highly esteem'd that the Emperor *Adrian* went twice into those Parts to be acquainted with 'em, upon which I cannot but have a Suspicion of their being chang'd. These were then accounted the best Entertainments of Religion, and yet they who were brought into the Secret must never open their Mouths about

about 'em, but only make their boaſt of Privileges that to all others were unknown. SERM. VI.

Secondly, There were Myſteries in the *Jewiſh* Religion. God made his *wonderful Works to be remembred. They thought of his loving Kindneſs in the midſt of his Temple*, and he was *terrible out of his holy Places. Theirs was the Glory*, which comprehended the Pillar of Cloud and Fire that ſecur'd their Marches thro' the Wilderneſs; and the great *Appearance* that was both the Guard and the Ornament of their Temple. *Timothy*, to whom this Epiſtle was directed had an Opportunity of hearing much about *both* theſe ſorts of Myſteries. For as his Father was a *Greek*, and himſelf uncircumcis'd for many Years, ſo he could be no Stranger to thoſe things of which the *Gentiles* always boaſted. And, on the other hand, as his *Grandmother* and *Mother* were ſerious People, and *from a Child had brought him up in the Knowledge of the Scriptures*, ſo he was taught to admire all the true Myſteries in which God had revealed himſelf to the *Jews*. Well, the Apoſtle tells him, that here was a Myſtery *greater* than what the one pretended to, and what the other really contain'd.

Pſ. cxi. 4. xlviii. 9. lxviii. 35. Rom. v. 4. Act. xvi. 1. 2 Tim. i. 5. iii. 15.

1. As to the Myſteries they made ſuch a Noiſe of in their Temple at *Epheſus*, they are all outdone by our Goſpel upon theſe four Accounts; that our Myſteries are learnt all at once, they refer us to our greateſt Happineſs, they come from God himſelf, and they are diffus'd over the whole World.

(1.) The Myſtery of Godlineſs is in this reſpect greater than any among the Heathen, in that we learn it *at once*. Here are no Years thrown away in a tedious Preparation. The Goſpel is not acquainted with thoſe wretched Arts of keeping People in Ignorance, as an Introduction to future Knowledge. No, no; *the Entrance of the Word gives Light:* It breaks in at once. *The People are all taught of God, and every one that hears and learns of the Father comes to Chriſt.* This *ſure Word of Propheſy*, to which we do well to take heed, *ſhines as a Light* in

Joh. vi. 45. 2 Pet. i. 19.

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in a dark Place. All was Confusion before, but that's done away; *the Darkness is past, and the true Light now shines.* *We all with open Face, beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord are chang'd into the same Image from Glory to Glory. They shall not teach every Man his Neighbour, and every Man his Brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least to the greatest. The Fathers have known him from the Beginning, the little Children have known the Father.* This is our first Benefit by the Ministry of the Gospel. 'Tis appointed to *open our Eyes, and turn us from Darkness to Light.*

1 Joh. ii. 8. 2 Cor. iii. 18. Heb. viii. 11. 1 Joh. ii. 13. Acts xxvi. 18.

There's no keeping of People in a preparatory Dulness. That's plainly the Trick of covetous Men. And *wo to those who take away the Key of Knowledge.* The Proceedings of Divine Grace are more generous; so that if the *Ephesians* boasted what Mysteries they had put themselves into the way of learning, and that in the space of a few Years they could know the great Secrets of Religion that were revealed no where else but in their Temple, *Timothy* had it in his power to demolish all that Confidence. He might tell 'em, that Christianity had its Mysteries, which we come to know, without all that laborious Search, or running a vain Round for many Years. *The least in the Kingdom of God* was acquainted, the first Moment of his Conversion, with a great deal more than they could pretend to. We have *the true Light that lighteth every Man that comes into the World.*

Lu. xi. 52. John i. 9.

(2.) THIS Mystery is about Matters of more Importance to our final Happiness. *This is Life eternal to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.* Here we learn what all the Liberality of the Gentile Priesthood neither could nor would have told us, that there's a Way of Redemption which brings *Glory to God in the highest, on Earth Peace,* and revealed a *good Will towards Men.* Here's a Doctrine fitted to the Tortures of an awaken'd Conscience, and all the Entanglement of a guilty Nature. Here we are led to admire

Joh. xvii. 3. Luk. ii. 14.

mire what God has done to make us happy, with a Glory to his Justice as well as his Mercy. SERM. VI.

They could never know God's Love to Mankind, whilst they were Strangers to him as *manifest in the Flesh.* This is a nobler sort of Evidence of his Regard to humane Nature than we can have in all the Bounties of Creation and Providence. *God so lov'd the World, that he gave his only Begotten Son into the World, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting Life.* How could they imagine any Repairs to the Injuries of a broken Law without a Satisfaction? And this they could never apprehend, had not he who was manifest in the Flesh been *justify'd in the Spirit.* Our Redemption is *in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness for the Remission of Sins that are past, that he might be just, and the Justifier of him that believes in Jesus.* They must be Strangers to all this till Christ Jesus was *preach'd unto the Gentiles,* and *believ'd on in the World.* Nor could they know where to rest their Confidence; what mighty Arm was able to bear the Faith of a Soul: But we *know in whom we have believed,* and that he can *save to the uttermost,* because he was *received up into Glory.* What signifies it to have a Company of Secrets and Rarities that make us neither better in our Practice, nor easier in our Expectations? You see, the Wonders of the Christian Religion are *no vain thing,* because they are *your Life.* They begin the Life that is now your Principle, they open and assure the Life that will be your Portion.

Joh. iii. 16.

Rom. iii. 24, 25, 26.

(3.) These Mysteries were given us by God himself. The long Time that the Heathen Religion would keep us waiting, and the new sett of Doctrines that were to be learnt every seven Years, had in it all the Appearance of Artifice: It looks as like Priestcraft as any thing in the World could do. But *God is the Rock; his Word is perfect, a God of Truth and*

Deu. xxxii. 4.

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and without Iniquity, just and right is he. There are none of these Frauds in the Discoveries to leave us uncertain about the Author.

The Prophets of old were not only *mov'd by the Holy Ghost*, but the Hand of God came upon them in such ways that others knew it was *from the Lord.* Zec. xi. 11. *The Poor of the Flock that waited upon* Zechariah *knew it was the Word of the Lord.* The Hand of the Lord God fell upon *Ezekiel* as he sat in his House, and Ezek. viii. 1. *the Elders of Judah sat before him.* In the new Testament the great Preacher was our Blessed Saviour. His Enemies knew that he was *a Teacher come from God, because no Man could do those Things that he did* John iii. 2. *except God was with him.* And as he *begun to preach the great Salvation*, so this was *afterwards confirm'd* Heb. ii. 3. *to us by them that heard him.* Nor do we depend only upon their Veracity, but *God himself bare them Witness with divers Signs and Wonders, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost according to his own Will.* They that 1 Thess. ii. 13. *receiv'd the Word, receiv'd it not as the Word of Men, but as it is in Truth the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in them that believe.*

I doubt not, but the Priests among the Heathen would tell their Pupils, that all the Discoveries they made came from Heaven. Just as some do now who plainly promote the Gentile Religion under the Christian Name, and are not asham'd to abuse the World with ridiculous Stories of Saints and Angels appearing, nay, of the Virgin *Mary*'s shewing herself to the Heroes of the little Factions among them: *intruding into things which they have not seen, vainly puffed up in their fleshly Minds.* We may confront these *Fables*, as we should do those of the Heathen, that it is unworthy of *the Spirits of just Men made perfect*, to come strolling from Heaven to Earth upon those childish Errands. For *the Dead know not any thing, neither have* Eccl. ix. 5, 6. *they any more a Reward, for the Memory of 'em is forgotten, also their Love and their Hatred and their Envy is now perish'd;*

viſh'd; neither have they any more a Portion for ever in any thing that is done under the Sun. They that die in the Lord do reſt from their Labours. SERM. VI.

The Revelation that God has given us is worthy of himſelf. It is the *Record about his Son.* It ſets his own Perfections in the beſt Light for our Eſteem and Worſhip. We never ſee the *Glory of God* ſo well as *in the Perſon of Jeſus Chriſt.* This is the *greateſt* thing that ever he did, as well as the beſt and kindeſt. This was more than making the World, and ſhows us his Power, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, moving in a nobler Deſign. When he ſeparated the Light from the Darkneſs, the Waters from the Earth, appointed Time to make the firſt Diviſion, and a Firmament the ſecond, he *look'd on what he had done, and it was all very good.* But the Partitions that he makes between Light and Darkneſs in the Redemption of Mankind are more auguſt and durable. Here Light and Darkneſs do not ſucceed and roll after one another as they do in our World; but are diſtributed into proper States and Regions. For his Enemies there, is a continual *Horrour of Darkneſs,* and for thoſe that are ſav'd there is *an Inheritance with the Saints in Light,* where *their Sun ſhall no more go down, for there is no Night there, but the Glory of the Lord doth lighten the Place, and the Lamb is the Light thereof.*

Rom. xiv. 13. 1 Joh. v. 10. 2 Cor. iv. 6. Gen. i. 31. Rev. xxi. 23.

(4.) THESE Myſteries are to be diffus'd and made known. The Obligation to keep all ſecret, which they learnt at the Temple of *Epheſus,* was cruel to the World, and could have no other Influence than to bloat with Pride and Vanity the People that had 'em. Thus they were render'd uſeleſs to the Creation, and only cumbred the Ground where they liv'd.

But is Chriſtianity ſuch a *vain Peculiar?* No, all they who have learnt the Things of God are to let their *Light ſhine before Men.* They muſt *hold forth the Word of Life;* they are to be *blameleſs and harmleſs as the Sons of God without Rebuke, ſhining as Lights in the World.* Thus we read of *adorning the Goſpel of God our Saviour* Tit. ii. 9.

Matt. v. 16. Phil ii. 15, 16.

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in all Things. The whole Body of Christians are *a Royal Priesthood, a peculiar People to shew forth the Praises of him who has call'd 'em out of Darkness into a marvellous Light.* 'Tis both their Duty and Inclination to call others into the Grace wherein they stand. In this Temper Christ is a Pattern to them, *I have not hid thy Righteousness within my Heart, I have not concealed thy Faithfulness and thy Truth.*

1 Pet. ii. 9.

Ps. xl. 10.

Thus may the Mysteries of Godliness be called *Great* in opposition to the vain Pretensions of the Heathen. What they boasted of was a needless Toil, and very oft a grand Impertinence. There were all the Suspicions of its being the Artifice of those that told it, and it left the People who receiv'd it as useless to the World as it found 'em. Whereas the Mystery of Godliness is *great* from the present Benefit that we have by it; from the Relation that it bears to our whole Felicity both in Earth and Heaven; from the Characters of a divine Original that are upon it; and from the Diffusion that it is to have abroad.

2. THERE were undeniable Mysteries among the *Jews.* God dealt with them as he had *not* done *with any other Nation.* They were call'd to *remember the marvellous things that he had wrought, the Wonders and the Judgments of his Mouth.* This was the peculiar Duty *of the Seed of* Abraham *his Servant, and the Children of* Jacob *his Chosen:* And yet in regard to these we may say GREAT *is the Mystery of Godliness.* There's a Distinction that God himself has given between the Wonders of the New Testament and those of the Old: They are more continuing, they refer us to themselves, they come in a nobler Way, and are attended with a greater Influence.

Psal. cxlvii. 20.

—cv. 5, 6.

(1.) OUR Mysteries are distinguish'd from those that God gave to the *Jews*, by their Continuance. Theirs were only so many *Signs for the time present:* Ours, as the Apostle saith, are *not of this Tabernacle.* The very Temple itself is call'd by that Name, to shew that it was to

Heb. ix. 9.

—xi.

be

be taken down: So that all the Wonders of the *Place within the Vail*, of the Mercy-seat upon the Ark, and the Cherubims of Glory shading it with their Wings, were limited. The Time would come when the Church of God should have nothing further to learn by 'em. The Law was but *our Schoolmaster to lead us to Christ*, and therefore were are *now no longer under a Schoolmaster*. But Christ is come *an High-priest of good Things to come by a greater and more perfect Tabernacle, that is to say, not of this Building; and not by the Blood of Bulls and Goats*, which had only a temporary Use, and a temporary Signification, *but by his own Blood he has enter'd into the holiest of all, having obtain'd eternal Redemption for us.* SERM. VI. Gal. iii. 24. —25. Heb. ix. 12, 13.

The High-priest's going into the Holy Place once a Year, with the Blood of others was a proper Emblem of the Way in which the Atonement was made, by an Officer of God's own appointing, and in a Method that shew'd his Satisfaction: But now the Sense of such a Ceremony is all over: If it was to be repeated again, we could not understand it. Whereas the thing signified carries in it an eternal Propriety, that *Christ having suffered for the Sins of many* should go, *not into the Holy Places made with Hands which are the Figures of the true, but into Heaven itself, there to appear in the Presence of God for us. Here Men die that receive Tithes, but there he receives 'em of whom it is witnessed that he lives. He is made not after the Law of a carnal Commandment, but after the Power of an endless Life. The Law makes Men Priests that have Infirmity, but the Word of the Oath that is since the Law makes the Son who is* perfected *for evermore. He has obtained a more excellent Ministry, by how much he is the Mediator of a better Covenant, which was established upon better Promises; For if that first Covenant had been faultless, there should have been found no Place for the second; for finding fault with them, he saith, Behold the Days come when I will make a new Covenant. In that he saith new Covenant he hath made the first old: Now that which decays and waxes old is ready to vanish away.* Ver. 24. Heb. vii 8. —16. —28. τετελειωμένον ν. 9. Cha. viii. 6. 7, 8, 13.

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(2.) OUR Mysteries refer us to themselves. The *Jews* had a respect to something else. Tho' God had appointed those ceremonial Atonements and Purifications, yet that Maxim must have been always true, that
Heb. x. 4. *it is not possible the Blood of Bulls and of Goats should take away Sin.* What Proportion is there between the Sin of Man and the Blood of a Brute? And much less can a Sacrifice be a suitable Offering to the Justice of him who is a *Spirit*, and will be worshipp'd in Spirit and in Truth. But, as we are told the Law had *a Shadow of good things to come*, it still carried on the Thoughts and Expectations of the People to *a better Hope.* Their
Jer. xvii. 12. Temple was a *glorious high Throne*, as it was a Figure of the Body of Christ, in which *all the Fulness of the Godhead* was to dwell. Their Mercy-Seat above the Ark was a Type of our Throne of Grace. Their High-priest, who had been *call'd of God*, was covered with an *Ephod*, had a fair Mitre upon his Head, and a Breastplate with the Names of the Children of *Israel* upon his Heart. This was a Figure of Christ Jesus,
Ps. xlv. 8. all whose *Garments do smell of Myrrh, Aloes, and Cassia, out of the ivory Palaces, whereby they have made him glad.* Their Sacrifices were typical of his Death, and the Righteousness that he should bring in: Their *Jerusalem* of our Heaven. And without such a Reference as this all their Worship had been in vain. Hence the Apostle speaks with a Contempt of those things that had once a divine Institution; partly, because their Use was then over, and partly because they had never any other than a relative Goodness. Thus he calls it *a*
Heb. ix. 1. *worldly Sanctuary*; and the Worship there, *weak and beg-*
ver. 10. *garly Elements, and carnal Ordinances impos'd upon 'em till the Time of the Reformatoin.*

Now the Mysteries of Christianity never carry us beyond themselves. We rest in the great Redemption itself, that God should be manifest in the Flesh, and justify'd in the Spirit: There's no going any farther: These are the very things that feed our Faith, and extend

tend our Hope. This was *the Hope of the Promiſe made of God unto the Fathers, unto which the Twelve Tribes earneſtly ſerving God day and night hoped to come.* SERM. VI. Acts xxvi. 6, 7.

(3.) OUR Myſteries come in a nobler Way: In a Method more agreeable to the lofty Nature of a rational Soul. God treats us now in the New Teſtament more like Spiritual Beings than he us'd to do his ancient People. We have nothing ſo groſs as what the Apoſtle calls by the Name of *carnal Ordinances*, and the *Rudiments of the World*. Their Building of a Temple was an Emblem of the Incarnation, their offering Sacrifices of the great Atonement. And thus were their Minds inſtructed about the Method of God's reſtoring Man to himſelf. But now he has ſtruck off all theſe carnal Conveyances from the Doctrine, and made it known by a Revelation that's more pure and divine; ſo that, *what ſaith the Righteouſneſs of Faith? not, who ſhall go into Heaven, to bring down Chriſt from above, or who ſhall deſcend into the deep to bring him from beneath? but the Word is nigh thee, even in thy Mouth and in thy Heart. If thou believe with thy Heart that Jeſus dy'd, and confeſs with thy Mouth that God rais'd him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſav'd.* Rom. x. 6—10.

(4.) THIS Myſtery is attended with a greater Influence, both as to Purity and Peace. *The Law made nothing perfect*, it ſtill left 'em in a wrong Way about their Devotions, *but the bringing in of a better Hope did, by the which Hope we now draw nigh unto God*, in a Way that they could not uſe. So it was as to Comfort. In their Diſpenſation, *thoſe Sacrifices which they offer'd year by year continually could never make the Comers thereunto perfect, for then would they not have ceas'd to be offer'd?* Yes ſurely, *becauſe the Worſhippers once purg'd ſhould have had no more Conſcience of Sins; but in thoſe Sacrifices there is a Remembrance made again of Sins every year.* Heb. vii. 19. x. 1, 2, 3.

It is otherwiſe in the Chriſtian Religion; for we are *ſanctified by the offering of the Body of Jeſus Chriſt once for all: Every Prieſt ſtands daily miniſtring and offering often-times* ver. 10.

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Heb. vii. 11, 12: *tentimes the same Sacrifices, which can never take away Sins; but this Man after he had offered one Sacrifice for Sins for ever sat down at the right hand of God.* He had then done, and gone thro' the whole Atonement. *Whereof the Holy Ghost is a Witness to us, in saying, their Sins and their Iniquities will I remember no more; now where Remission of these is, there's no more offering for Sin.* And the Consequence of the whole is, that *we have therefore Boldness to enter into the Holiest of all, by the Blood of Jesus.*

15, 17, 18.

19.

[2.] IT is further said that this Mystery is great *without Controversy.* There was room to dispute the Original of the Heathen Wonders; those which their Priests gave out. Men who lov'd to enquire into things could not be without their Suspicions, that Fraud in the Design and Confidence in the Revelation went a great way into those Pretensions. *Among all the wise Men of the Nations and in all their Kingdoms there's none like to our God, but they are altogether brutish and foolish. They inherited Lies, Vanity, and things wherein there is no Profit.* But here's a Mystery that all confess. Under this Head I shall observe four Things.

Jer. x. 7. 8. xvi. 19.

1. IT does not mean there should be no Dispute about it. *The natural Man* never did, and never will *receive the Things of the Spirit of God, they are Foolishness to him. The preaching of the Cross is to them that perish Foolishness.* The Scripture has foretold this, and it is but in our Age as it has been in those before us; there is no new thing under the Sun. Three Causes may be assign'd for it.

1 Cor. ii. 14. i. 18.

First, The Enmity that there is in our Nature to the Things of God. Till we are a willing People the Light will be grievous to us. One dram of Grace in the Heart is the best Battery against all those carnal Reasonings that we advance in Opposition to the Gospel: This pulls down *the strong Holds and every Imagination, and brings all our high Thoughts*

2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

that

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that exalt themſelves againſt the Knowledge of Chriſt in Subjection to him. Our Underſtandings are vitiated as well as our Affections, and as there is a Principle that ſaith of God's Commands, *what a Wearineſs is it!* So there is another that ſaith what is as vile of his Doctrines *they are Fooliſhneſs being only ſpiritually diſcern'd.*

We ſee what Pains People will take to ſhift off a Duty, how many Excuſes they find, what Delays they run into, and how cunning and copious a corrupt Nature is to expreſs all it's Enmity againſt the Authority of God. Thus laborious is our Invention againſt a Myſtery. We will except, ſometimes to the Ground of a Revelation, ſometimes to the Sufficiency of it, and again to the Uſe of it. Either it is not declar'd to us at all, or not with Evidence enough, or it is an Indifference whether we believe it or no. Thus much are People upon their Guard againſt the Knowledge of the Truth as it is in Jeſus. If they cannot reſiſt, they will flee; when they cannot ſhut out a Conviction, they will run away from it. Now, what can this be owing to, but the ill Turn that we got by the Fall? they who are dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins are *fulfilling the Deſires* Eph. ii. 3. *of the* Mind as well as of the Fleſh. It all proceeds from a hatred of God; and that is directed againſt his Wiſdom as much as his Government. We can no more endure the Light that is about his Throne than the Greatneſs that fills his Law. The firſt Wickedneſs of our Nature conſiſted in a Love of ſome Wiſdom that we were to get in our own way. From that time we have had a hatred of *the Wiſdom that deſcends from above*, both as it is pure and as it is peaceable. So that, it is no Wonder that *they who do evil* joh. iii. 20. *hate the Light*; that the natural Man who receives not the things of the Spirit of God ſhould count them Fooliſhneſs.

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Secondly, The Scripture has given us another Reason of this, and that is the Influence of *Satan*. *If* 2 Cor. iv. 3. 4. *our Gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this World has blinded the Eyes of them that believe not, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ who is the Image of the invisible God should shine into their Hearts.* He was an early Enemy to our Lord: And what he was to his Person he will be to his Rev. xii. 17. Doctrine. *The Dragon was wroth with the Woman, and makes War with the Remnant of her Seed, which keep the Commandment of God, and have the Testimony* 2 Cor. xi. 3. *of Jesus. The Serpent who beguiled* Eve *through his Subtilty* endeavours to *corrupt our Minds from the Simplicity that is in Christ.* Christ came to destroy *Satan*'s Empire, and therefore he takes the Alarm, and do as all that he can to resist the glorious Invader. As it is by the Gospel, that a Redeemer rides in the Chariots of Salvation, so we may expect the Enemy will use his Endeavours to disturb the Wheels; sometimes he does it by Superstition, leading out the Zeal of People into vain Things that cannot profit: Sometimes he pursues his Design by Persecution, *The De-* Rev. ii. 10. *vil shall cast some of you into Prison, and ye shall have Tribulation ten Days:* And sometimes in a more direct Onset upon the great Mysteries of Godliness, 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2. teaching Persons to *deny the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and to bring upon themselves swift* Rev. xx. 8. *Destruction. He shall go out, and deceive the Nations which are in the four Quarters of the Earth.*

Thirdly, I believe a great deal of this Opposition is owing to the Terrors of an uneasy Conscience. They dare not let this Faculty look into the Law of God, and therefore they set it a quarrelling with the Gospel. Thus Debauchery goes off into a Wrangling. These hard Questions are a Ball thrown to the Conscience, to keep it at play, and divert it from working and wounding within. 'Tis for this Reason, that several People who abhor the Practice of Religion

Religion profeſs themſelves to be Champions againſt its Myſteries; and what a poor Deluſion is this to ſecret Qualms, that ſuch and ſuch a Text is not in ſome antient Copies? What's that to thoſe who *live as without a God in the World*, who *caſt off Fear and reſtrain Prayer before God?* Is it not enough that they oppoſe Chriſtianity in their Lives, but muſt they do it alſo in their Profeſſion? 'Twill be of no avail to them another Day to plead the uncertain Authority of ſome Scriptures: That's no Excuſe for Swearing and Immorality. All Copies agree in the Truth of thoſe Words, *Thou ſhalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him Guiltleſs, who taketh his Name in vain.* SERM. VI. 2 Ep. ii. 12. Job xv. 4. Deu. v. 11.

2. This Myſtery is without Controverſy to all the Ages of God's People. They have own'd it, and have done ſo practically. This has kept them humble in their own Eyes, and made them earneſt for *the Spirit of Wiſdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of* what they don't underſtand. *They have acknowledg'd the Myſtery of God, and of the Father, and of Chriſt.* This has given them a Temper of Love to others. Any one that looks into the great Doctrines of Salvation will own, that the more he ſees of their Myſtery the leſs he is capable of perſecuting thoſe that don't believe them. He finds the Truth of the Obſervation, *No Man can ſay that Jeſus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt.* He wonders not at the Ignorance of People and the Oppoſition that riſes from it. It is only the Grace of God that has made it otherwiſe with him. The *Jews* had *a Zeal of God, but not according to Knowledge; for they being ignorant of God's Righteouſneſs, and going about to eſtabliſh a Righteouſneſs of their own, have not ſubmitted themſelves to the Righteouſneſs of God. Even to this Day when* Moſes *is read, the Vail is upon their Heart; and when they turn to the Lord, the Vail ſhall be taken away.* Eph. i. 17. Col. ii. 2. 1 Cor. xii. 3. Rom. x. 2, 3. 2 Cor. iii. 15, 16.

A Perſon

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A Perſon that guards a Myſtery in the Chriſtian Religion with penal Laws knows nothing what belongs to it. He that will force the natural Man to receive what he knows before-hand he cannot receive, is guilty of the ſame Crime with *Simon Magus*; He thought the Gift of God might be *bought*, and and theſe think it may be *ſold*. This puniſhing of Hereſy, and rewarding of Orthodoxy, is not teaching the Chriſtian Religion as if it was myſterious. If we really apprehended, there was no knowing theſe things till God himſelf had open'd our Eyes, we ſhould take every penal Law to be a Reproach upon him; and it's adding to the Miſery of Sinners, if ſuch as he marks out for *Darkneſs* in another World are to ſuffer *Perſecution* in this. *The Servant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient; in Meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves, if peradventure God will give them Repentance to the Acknowledgement of the Truth; and that they may recover themſelves out of the Snare of the Devil, who are taken Captive by him at his Will.*

2 Tim. ii. 24, 25, 26.

July 6, 1718.

SERMON VII.

THIS Myſtery is without Controverſy to thoſe whom the Grace of God has brought from the Darkneſs of Infidelity. They will ſay as *Jacob* did, *Surely the Lord* was in this Truth, *and I knew it not; this is the Houſe of God, and this is the Gate of Heaven.* They give way to the ſweet Excurſions of Joy and Wonder. What they us'd to deſpiſe as meer Fooliſhneſs poſſeſſes and fills their Eſteem.

Gen. xviii. 16.

Eſteem. And a Teſtimony from ſuch People as theſe ought the more to be valu'd, becauſe it ſhows us there's a Conqueſt of the Prejudice. *That which had not been told 'em have they ſeen, and that which they had not heard do they conſider.* SERM. VII. Iſa. lii. 15.

I'll go no farther in the Search of Examples than the New Teſtament, which may be call'd *the Book of the Wars of the Lord.* There we ſee what Methods he took to ſhow his Power, and proſper his Love. We find that the bare Preaching of the Word, without any Addition of Force, Temptation, or Intereſt has ſunk down into the Hearts of Men. The *Jews* to whom the Croſs was a *Stumbling-block*, and the *Greeks* that call'd it *Fooliſhneſs*, came to ſee that it was *the Wiſdom of God, and the Power of God.* I may give you one Inſtance under each of theſe Heads. 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

Of the former ſort I look upon the Story of *Saul* to be the moſt eminent. His Contempt of Chriſt was fortify'd with *Jewiſh* Learning, and the Prepoſſeſſion of a mighty Zeal for the Traditions of the Fathers. *He perſecuted the Church of God above meaſure, and waſted it. He thought within himſelf that he ought to do many things contrary to the Name of* Jeſus of Nazareth. *Many of the Saints he ſhut up in Priſon, and compelled 'em to blaſpheme.* This ſhews us what a Turn his Prejudice gave him; that he put theſe poor People upon denying and deriding the great Doctrines of Redemption. As they were *his* Abhorrence, ſo he would make 'em *theirs.* *He was taught according to the perfect manner of the Law of the Fathers, and was zealous towards God, perſecuting this Way unto the Death, binding and delivering into Priſons both Men and Women.* But what a Renovation of Judgment did he come under? He was brought to ſee the Wiſdom of a Deſign which before he hated. There was nothing that he ſo much valued as *the Excellency of the Knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus his Lord.* Formerly he ſaw no Glory in this Revelation: But now, *the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt* are what he regards with an Gal. i. 13. Acts xxvi. 9, 10, 11. Acts xxii. 3, 4. Phil. iii. 8. Eph. iii. 8.

Eſteem

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Eſteem in himſelf, and what he thought it his Honour to *preach among the Gentiles.* What he us'd to ſet at nought, he now endeavour'd *to make all Men ſee,* viz. *the Fellowſhip of the Myſtery that from the beginning of the World has been hid in God, who created all things by Jeſus Chriſt.* And tho' he once thought it beneath the Study of Men, yet now he ſees, *that unto the Principalities and Powers in heavenly Places muſt be made known by the Church the manifold Wiſdom of God.* He that was brought up at the Feet of *Gamaliel,* and after the moſt perfect manner of the Law, had been a Phariſee, deſires to *know nothing but Jeſus Chriſt and him crucify'd.* What he took for Gain he found to be Loſs, yea he *counted all things Loſs for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus his Lord.* Here his Thoughts were entertain'd and his Affections employ'd. Tho' to him as well as others, the things of the Spirit had been Fooliſhneſs, yet from this intellectual Antipathy he comes to believe what he heard, to admire what he believ'd, and to improve what he admir'd: *following after, if he might apprehend that for which he was apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus.*

Eph. iii. 9.

ver. 10.

1 Cor. ii. 2.

The other Inſtance that I promis'd to give you was from the *Heathen*; and you will find that the Grace of God was *exceeding abundant towards them, with Faith and Love which are in Chriſt Jeſus.* Their Learning bows itſelf as *Dagon* did before the Ark; it falls flat, and breaks to pieces. Tho' at *Athens* they had all the Scorn that could be for the Perſon and Doctrine of the Apoſtle, yet *ſome of 'em believ'd,* when they heard him more fully upon the Revelation that he brought among 'em. They that call'd him a *Babbler,* and a *Setter forth of Strange Gods* are ſaid to *cleave unto him* upon his telling them that *God had appointed a Day in which he would judge the World in Righteouſneſs, by that Man whom he has ordain'd, whereof he has given aſſurance to all Men in that he rais'd him from the Dead.* It was Jeſus and the Reſurrection which they call'd by the Name of ſtrange Gods before; and yet now they ſaw the Wiſdom and

Acts xvii. 33, 34.

Empire

Empire of the divine Nature in that Contrivance; that it gave us Notions worthy of a God, and fitted to a Soul. SERM. VII.

But the most eminent Instance of this kind we read of at *Ephesus*, where *the Name of the Lord was magnify'd, and many that believed came and confessed, and shew'd their Deeds: Many of them also who us'd curious Arts brought their Books together, and burnt 'em before all Men, and they counted the Price of 'em, and found it to be fifty thousand Pieces of Silver; so mightily grew the Word of God and prevail'd.* The People here describ'd were got into such an engaging Study as would give 'em an Opinion that they had something wiser in their own keeping than these Apostles could teach 'em. And yet you see what Havock and Destruction the Grace of God carried into all that sort of Learning. *They confessed and shew'd their Deeds;* that they were vain and vile, foolish and wicked; nay, they *brought their Books together*, as if they had agreed in a common Act of Reproach upon the Science itself: *They burn'd 'em before all Men*; tho' with what Expence and Care they had collected 'em, you see by the Price they came to, which was fifty thousand Pieces of Silver, that is, about fifteen hundred Pounds. If any People had it in their Power to detect the Weakness and Fraud of the Christian Doctrine, it must be these Men; and therefore when they give such a public Witness to the Truth of Religion, it comes after a fair Trial. *They turn'd from Idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from Heaven, even Jesus who delivers us from the Wrath to come.* These *Ephesians* are brought to *comprehend with all Saints, what is the Heighth, Length and Breadth and Depth, and to know the Love of Christ that passes Knowledge, and be filled with all the Fulness of God.*

Acts xix. 17, 18, 19, 20. 1 Thes. i. 10. Eph. iii. 18, 19.

4. This is a Mystery without Controversy, because it still continues to be a Mystery after all the ways that Men have taken to explain it. Our Faith, is often *beguiled by Philosophy and vain Deceit, after* Col. ii. 8.

the

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the Rudiments of the World, and the Commandments of Men, and not after Christ. We are in Danger of being *spoil'd* with it. There has been many an Insult upon Revelation from the Fancies of Men, but God has usually blasted them. They have set their Threshold by his Threshold, and their Posts by his Post. They have cast the Doctrine of Religion into barbarous Moulds. *From whence have we had our Wars and Fightings,* but from the Lusts of the Mind as well as those of the Flesh?

Jam. iii. 17. *The Wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable;* the Wisdom of the Schools is neither; first, 'tis muddy, earthy and polluted, and then it is fierce and quarrelsome.

What a Bandage of hard Words have they given to the Doctrine of Justification, till they have almost distinguish'd it out of the Church? And after all their laborious Niceties, it will never be better understood than by God's own Account of it; that *he has set forth*

Rom. iii. 25, 26. *him to be a Propitiation for our Sins through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness in the Remission of Sins that are past, that God may be just and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus.* There's more in one Breath and Sentence of the Bible, than in all the voluminous Disputations that have rais'd such a Dust in the World.

1 Pet. iii. 18. Isa. liii. 6. Dan. ix. 26. Isa. liii. 12. 2 Cor. v. 19, 21. That, *he died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God:* That, *the Lord laid on him the Iniquity of us all:* That, *the* Messiah *was cut off, but not for himself:* That, *he bare the Sins of many:* That, *God has in Christ Jesus reconcil'd us to himself, not imputing our Trespasses to us, but made him to be Sin for us who knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him.* These are as plain as Language can make the Thing: The Difficulty here lies not in the Words but in the Doctrine itself; and that being the Counsel of God, it must be mysterious. We can never by searching find it out to Perfection. But I'm sure the Way to bring it down to our Conceptions is not to strip it of the Phrase that God has given it, and cloath it with our own.

own. It's never the plainer for any of thoſe little Arts. And we find by the *vain Jangling* to which ſome turn aſide, that they *neither underſtand what they ſay, nor whereof they affirm.* SERM. VII.

Explaining a Myſtery muſt be quite wrong. 'Tis beſt to keep it in its own Language, and not utter *Words hard to be underſtood.* It's at leaſt a daring Practice; not treating it as a Myſtery, but throwing it into a Rumble of Sounds. For theſe Reaſons I could wiſh that Saying had not obtain'd among Divines that the Father is the *Fountain of the Deity.* This is a Nicety that we have *nothing in Scripture* to lead us into. 'Tis being *wiſe above what is written,* and exerciſing ourſelves in *things too high for us.* After all the Pains that Men have taken to make theſe Doctrines intelligible to Reaſon, which is indeed to degrade 'em from their Myſtery, we ſee 'tis in vain: For ſtill *without Controverſy* great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs. I have no more to do from this part of my Subject than to give you a few practical Directions about the Uſe that ſhould be made of Myſteries in Religion.

1. If you would treat Chriſtianity, or any particular Article as a Myſtery, be careful to ſeparate the Doctrine from all the Mixtures that Curioſity or Superſtition have brought into it. Miniſters ſhould not come to you with *Excellency of Speech or Knowledge in declaring to you the Goſpel of God.* 'Tis certain that theſe matters could never be known if the Spirit that ſearches all things had not reveal'd them. Our Faith ſtands, *not in the Wiſdom of Man, but in the Power of God.* 1 Cor. ii. 1.

2. Read the Scriptures diligently, comparing *ſpiritual Things with Spiritual.* Be able to know what Phraſes are us'd there, and what are of foreign Extraction. Where there is an awful Darkneſs in one Text, endeavour to ſee the way into it by the eaſier Light of another. And obſerve the great Deſign of Scripture, upon which God has put that Book into your Hands; take the general Scope of it along with you.

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you. 'Tis lamentable to see with what Fury Persons can push their Opinions who are not able to bring one Verse of the Bible into their Argument.

That there are Difficulties in these *lively Oracles* is what we are not asham'd to own. As they come from a God *who only has Immortality, and dwells in that Light to which no Man can approach*; as they consist of matters that relate to an unseen World, 'tis no wonder that the *Unstable and Ignorant do wrest them to their own Destruction*, and that the best Believers are fill'd with a holy Admiration. But I am far from thinking that the Design of revealing these Things that are so *hard to be understood*, is that we may have a Dependance upon our Teachers, and receive all that they will please to give us. The Learning of Ministers is one of those Means that God has blest to the Enlightening of the World; a Skill in the original Languages, and an acquaintance with eastern Customs are mighty Helps to find out the Sense of many Passages. But, it's plain that the Book is design'd for all People. In the Days of the Son of Man it is promis'd, that *there shall be a way of Holiness so easy, that way-faring Men though Fools shall not err therein.* The Entrance of God's Word gives a Light that makes Wise the Simple. There's no Necessity for all Persons to know the critical Meaning of every Text: They may *desire the sincere milk of the Word and grow thereby*; They may see enough for their Edification and Comfort, though they are still unacquainted with many Beauties in the Phrase and Argument. We know that the mere Bible it self without any Explanations has been attended with a Blessing. Thus it was at the Reformation, *many run to and fro* with a few Leaves of the Book, and so *Knowledge was increased.* Therefore, *let the Word of God dwell richly in you.* 'Tis thus that ministers *are made perfect, thorowly furnish'd to every good Work.*

2 Pet. iii. 17.

Isa. xxxv. 8.

1 Pet. ii. 2.

Dan. xii. 4.

2 Tim. iii. ult.

3 ATTEND

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3. ATTEND the Ordinances of the Gospel. *He that walks with wise Men shall be wise.* This Method God has bless'd for the *opening of our Eyes, and turning us from Darkness to Light.* I am no way surpriz'd at the the *strong Delusions* that obtain among us; we see them in Men that *receive not the Love of the Truth.* How should they possibly be in the right, who throw off all Worship, are *Aliens to the common Wealth of Israel, and live as without a God in the World?* The Apostle observes, *He that is of God hears us, He that is not of God hears not us; hereby know we the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error.* Thus all Ages were Believers built up in their most holy Faith.

Acts xxvi. 18. 2 Thess. ii. 10. 1 Joh. iv. 6.

I don't tell you, (and I dare say there is not one among you supposes that I would be guilty of it) that you are to trust any Ministers by an implicit Faith; but this Liberty in your selves is no Argument against the Ordinances of the Gospel. We are to *use our Liberty as the Servants of God.* It's observ'd of the *Bereans*, whose Evangelical Nobility can never be too much remember'd and admir'd, that *they receiv'd the Word with all Readiness of Mind, though they search'd the Scriptures daily whether the Things were so or no.* When our Blessed Saviour *received Gifts for Men*, among the rest, *he gave them Pastors and Teachers:* and this was, *for the work of the Ministry, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the edifying the Body of Christ, till we all come in the Unity of the Faith to the Knowledge of the Son of God; that we henceforth be no more Children, tost'd to and fro by every Wind of Doctrine, by the Sleight of Men, and cunning Craftiness, whereby they lye in Wait to deceive.* We see by Experience, that the humble Christian who waits at Wisdom's Gates does visibly advance; there is in him a discernable Increase of *Grace, and of the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* And on the other Hand, the brighter Parts and greater Learning of People either deadens

1 Pet. ii. 16. Acts xvii. 2. Eph. vi. 11, 12, 13, 14. 2 Pet. iii. ult.

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into Dulneſs, or ſowrs into Error, when they neglect the Means of improving it. *He that has, to him ſhall be given, and from him that has not, ſhall be taken away, even that which he ſeemed to have.* The Light that is in him ſhall be Darkneſs, and then, *how great is that Darkneſs?* If, therefore, you would *hold*

Heb. x. 25. *faſt the Profeſſion of your Faith without wavering, forſake not that aſſembling of your ſelves together, as the manner of ſome is, but conſider one another to provoke unto Love and good Works*; that ye may abound in Wiſdom, and increaſe more and more.

4. PRAY for the Spirit. Though this is the greateſt Gift, yet you may ask it with the greateſt

Luk. xi. 13. Hope. For *if ye being evil know how to give good Gifts unto your Children, how much more ſhall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* Deſire that by his Light you may be conducted into the true Senſe of Scripture and the real Benefit of Ordinances; That, when you read the word of God, you may ſee the wondrous Things contain'd in his Law; and, when you come into the Aſſemblies of his People, you may *walk in the Light*

1 Cor. ii. 12. *of the Lord. We have receiv'd, not the Spirit of this World, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may have*

1 Joh. ii. 20. *the Things that are given to us of God. Ye have an Unction from the holy one, and ye know all Things.*

In order to this, take Care that you do not grieve the Spirit: This includes the utmoſt guard over your

1 Pet. ii. 1, 2. Tempers, *laying aſide all Malice and Guile, and Hypocriſy and Evil ſpeaking, receive the ſincere Milk of the Word.* An angry furious Man is out of the way of Truth and Peace, becauſe he is doing Violence to him whoſe Office it is to *lead us into the Way of all Truth.*

Jam. i. 19, 20, 21. *Wherefore, my beloved Brethren, let every Man be ſwift to hear, ſlow to ſpeak, ſlow to Wrath; for the Wrath of Man works not the Righteouſneſs of God: Wherefore lay apart all Filthineſs and Superfluity of Naughtineſs, and with Meekneſs receive the ingrafted Word, which is able to ſave*

your

your Souls. We are bid to *speak the Truth in Love,* not only as it is the best way of convincing others, but of nourishing our selves; for thus *we grow up unto him in all Things, who is the Head even Christ Jesus.* A Person who indulges himself in Ungodly Passions *holds the Truth in Unrighteousness:* He stops the Circulation in the mystical Body; He will be a wither'd Branch; He does not derive fast enough from Christ Jesus: His Soul cannot thrive in the Courts of the Lord. He is like a Thistle by the sides of a Vine that may be said to defend it, but draws no manner of Virtue from it. Do you therefore believe that nothing but the Scripture is the Rule, and none but the Holy Spirit is a sufficient Teacher, and that it is your utmost Concern, not to forfeit and grieve away all the Instruction that you stand in need of? *The Meek will he guide in Judgment, the Meek will he teach his way.* You must *buy* of Christ *Gold tried in the Fire, and anoint your Eyes with his Eye-salve, that you may see.* SERM. VII. Eph.iv.15. Ps. xxv. 9. Rev.iii.18.

5. TAKE care of quarrelling about these Mysteries, and *becoming vain in your Imaginations.* The Doctrines of the Christian Religion were never given us to furnish a Campaign. But *the Fruit of Righteousness is sown in Peace of them that make Peace.* They are not only of a sublime but an useful Nature. As for Example, it is a very little matter to be train'd up in the best way of conceiving and delivering the Doctrine of Justification; to do it without the Fraud of Hereticks, and the Trash of Schoolmen: This will be of no Consequence to one who is yet in his Sins, and has the Wrath of God abiding on him. 'Tis more my Business to have the Privilege than barely to know the Truth, that I may have *strong Consolation in fleeing for a Refuge to the Hope that is set before me.* 'Twas a great Thing that our Saviour said of the Publican, that *he went down to his House justify'd.* Carrying the Mercy of Justification along with Jam.iii.18. Heb.vi.16. Luke xviii. 14.

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with us is more than carrying away the Doctrine. The main thing is to have it go with us to our Houses. *Blessed is he whose Transgression is forgiven, whose Sin is cover'd; Blessed is the Man to whom the Lord imputes not Iniquity.* God has reveal'd to us the way of Salvation by Jesus Christ, not to set us a quarrelling about the manner of declaring it, but that we may *win Christ, and be found in him, not having on our own Righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is by the Faith of the Son of God.*

Psal. xxxii. 1, 2.

Phil. iii. 8, 9.

6. BE more concern'd about the improving of a Mystery than the explaining it. Enquire upon a Head of Revelation, not only, what is there for me to *know*, but what is there for me to *do*. *Receive the Love of the Truth that you may be saved.* What a poor Business would it have been for *Noah*'s Sons to fall a disputing about the shape and convenience of the Ark, when the Waters were rolling after them? Their Concern was to get within it, and so to be saved. This practical way of regarding a Truth is the Means of giving you a greater Knowledge. As our Saviour observes, *if any Man does his Will, then shall he know the Doctrine whether it is of God, or I speak of my Self.* If what God has reveal'd to you about his Nature is mysterious, let it employ your Adoration. *O the depth of the Riches, both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his ways are past finding out? Who has known the Mind of the Lord, and who has been his Counsellor! For of him, and to him, and through him are all Things, to whom be Glory for ever and ever.*

2 Thes. ii. 10.

Joh. vii. 17.

Rom. xi. 33, 34, 36.

SER-

SERMON VIII.

July 20. 1718.

1 TIM. iii. 16.

------ *The Mystery of* GODLINESS.

THIS Word gives us the third general Character of the Christian Religion. The first was, that it is the *Pillar and Ground of Truth*, what the Faith of Mankind may rely upon with Confidence: And the second is like unto it, that it is *a Mystery*, to employ all your Affections of Delight and Wonder; and, now, lest any People should think, they are only to be confus'd with airy Speculations, we are told, in the third Place, that it reaches the *Practice*, and fills our Duty as well as our Thoughts. 'Tis to make us wiser and better, and hence it is called the Mystery of *Godliness*: Which takes into it these three Things:

1. It agrees to the main Design of Godliness.

2. It has a Tendency to promote it; nay,

3. It has the best Influence upon it. And in each of these Particulars, it is distinguish'd from those Mysteries that are not of divine Original; such as wicked Men have contriv'd, and foolish ones believ'd. Their coming is *after the working of Satan, with all Powers and Signs and lying Wonders, and with all Deceivableness of Unrighteousness in those that perish*; upon whom *God has sent strong Delusions that they should believe a Lye.* 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10, 11.

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1. THERE's nothing in the Myſteries of Religion inconſiſtent with Holineſs to God and Beneficence to Men. They are not contriv'd to take People off from their Duty, to make them vain in themſelves and uſeleſs to others. There is not one Principle of Piety or Charity that ſuffers by them. They do not break in upon any *Law of Liberty*. And this is more than can be ſaid of the lying *Wonders* that ſome have obtruded upon us.

In this Compariſon I will not lead you very far abroad, but give you a view of the Chriſtian Religion and thoſe Myſteries that are in it, as they appear to be of quite another Nature from the Inventions of Men. The oppoſite Inſtance that I ſhall bring is the Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*. I have frequently heard and read that boaſt of the Papiſts, that there is as good an Argument for this as there is for the *Trinity*; and that no Objection can lie againſt the one, which may not with as much Force be applied againſt the other. This I think may be eaſily diſſolv'd, if it was not out of the way of my Subject. I could ſhow you that there is a great Difference between eſtabliſhing a Doctrine by the Decrees of Men and receiving it upon the plain Grounds of a Revelation; and that it is much eaſier to find a Similitude or a Metaphor in that Saying, *This is my Body*, than it can be in the other, *Theſe three are One*; and that in a Caſe which is plainly within the Reach of my Senſes, I may ſafely uſe 'em, but when the Matter is confeſſedly above 'em, I ought to believe without 'em: Becauſe this is what *no Man either has ſeen or can ſee*. But as I ſaid, the Purſuit of thoſe Anſwers would make me wander too far from my Text.

1 Tim. vi. 16.

I will therefore run the Compariſon between the two Doctrines upon the Head of their Conſiſtence with practical Religion. 'Tis eaſy to ſee how much the Peace and Purity of my Life are promoted by a Belief of this, that *there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, and that theſe three*

1 Joh. v. 7.

are

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are one: That *God was manifeſt in the Fleſh, and juſtified in the Spirit.* The Divinity of a Saviour is a mighty Argument for the Dependence of my Soul upon him. 'Tis from this, that I can truſt in his Merit, and be always looking at his Interceſſion; becauſe, *as he continues for ever, he has an unchangeable Prieſthood.* On this Account we perform our Duty to him with the reſt of his People, *calling on the Name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, both their Lord, and ours.* We are *under the Law to Chriſt.* If he was not God, I would not *honour the Son as I honour the Father,* nor as *I believe in God, ſo believe in him.* There could be no Peace of Conſcience without a Senſe of Pardon and the Hopes of a Protection: Now, *He is therefore able to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come unto God by him, ſeeing that he ever lives to make Interceſſion for them.* And the ſame happy Concluſions may be argued from the Divinity of the HOLY SPIRIT. He that *creates us anew in Chriſt Jeſus,* He that *comforts us in all our Tribulations,* He that *helps our Infirmities* in Prayers, He that *guides us into the Land of Uprightneſs* can be no leſs than a God. In theſe Caſes we are ſaid to be *all taught of God.* If that is his Title, I cannot over-do it in my Expectations from him. He is *able to make all Grace abound towards me.* I believe a Victory over my Corruptions as well as a Pardon for them. That tho' all *my Pains* cannot deſtroy the Seeds of Pride and Paſſion and Worldly Mindedneſs, yet *the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty. We are chang'd from Glory to Glory by this Spirit of the Lord.*

Heb. vii. 24. 1 Cor. i. 2. ix. 21. Joh. v. 23. —xiv. 1. Heb. vii. 25. Eph. xi. 10. 2 Cor. i. 4. Rom. viii. 26. Pſ. cxliii. 10.

But now, What is there of this in the Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*? What am I better for it, either in my Hope or Practice? Don't we plainly ſee that it eats out all Religion? There's more Adoration paid to the conſecrated Wafer, than there is to any thing elſe; bowing before it, looking upon it, 2 Cor. iii.

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giving it the loweſt homage: Now, this is more than is owing even to the Body of Chriſt Jeſus himſelf; *That* was never the Object of a religious Reverence, being no other than a Creature. So that, though the Words of the New Teſtament were to be taken in *the Popiſh Senſe*, they would not put us upon any act of Adoration. Saying *this is my Body* is no Argument for me to fall down before it, unleſs he had ſaid, this is my Divinity; here I am *as a God*. Calling it *his Body*, expreſſes no more than the humane Nature: And, therefore, if it is poſſible to change the Bread into *That*, yet it is Idolatry to bow down before it. So that, this Myſtery of *Theirs*, ſtrikes at the Root of all practical Religion, by giving divine Worſhip to *that which is not God*. And the Conſequence of this is the drawing off their Thoughts, their Joy, their Dependence from the infinite Nature, where alone they ought to be fix'd.

1 Pet. i. 21. Heb. ix. 14. 'Tis ſaid of the *Man* Chriſt Jeſus, *that by him we believe in God*, that *he offer'd himſelf to God*. But this Practice is in them as well as the Heathen a *worſhiping and ſerving the Creature more than the Creator who is over all God, bleſſed for evermore*. He tells us in the ſecond Commandment, that he is a *jealous God*, and it is upon this very Conſideration that the Apoſtle argues againſt all humane Fancies at *the Lord's Table*; *do we provoke the Lord to Jealouſy, are we ſtronger than he?* Shall we *even there* proſtrate our ſelves to any but the moſt High? Shall we make an Idol of the greateſt Bleſſing that he has given us; and defraud him of the Honour that is due to himſelf alone, for the ſake of that lower Nature, that he was pleas'd to take upon him? Thus you ſee, how the Belief of this Doctrine, and the whole Practice of their Church are inconſiſtent with that Principle that lies at the Heart of all Religion, that God alone is to be worſhip'd.

Rom. i. 25.

1 Cor. x. 29.

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2. THE Doctrines of Christianity have a Tendency to promote all Godliness. They are given upon that very Design. In another Place it is call'd *the Doctrine according to Godliness*, that's fram'd by the same Model with it. These Things are revealed on purpose to turn *our Feet into the way of Peace, to give Light unto them that sit in Darkness, and in the Shadow of Death.* Nay, besides the Homage that must be paid to God, we have a mysterious Religion that makes us useful to the World. You see upon what view *Life and Immortality are brought to Light by the Gospel.* He there lays down the original Principle of Revelation, that *the Love and Kindness of God our Saviour towards Man appear'd, not by works of Righteousness that we have done, but according to his Mercy has he saved us, by the working of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that we being justify'd by his Grace, may be Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life.* And what is all this for? Only to throw us into a Method of individual Piety? No, but to make us of Service to others. *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they who have believ'd in God may be careful to maintain good Works; these Things are good and profitable unto Men.* The Reason he gives in the next Words why we are to *avoid foolish Questions and Genealogies, and strivings about the Law* is because *they are unprofitable and vain.* They do no manner of good.

1 Tim. vi. 3.

Luk. i. 79.

Tit. iii. 4, 5.

This may be truly affirm'd of *Transubstantiation*; it is an *useless* Mystery, as much against *Peace upon Earth*, as it is against *Glory to God in the highest.* It shows *no good will towards Men*, but is plainly a *Cloke of Covetousness*, for a Priest first to lead you into the Dark, and then to rob you. It *changes the Glory of the incorruptible God into an Image made like to corruptible Man.* The manner of pressing it, is, like it self, *unchristian,*

Rom. i. 23.

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unchristian, earthly, sensual, and devilish. They do not recommend it, as they would the *Wisdom that de-*
Jam. iii. 17. *scends from above*; for that being *first pure*, it would be also *peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits.* Whereas, there never was, that I can hear, any common Temper shown in the Service that is paid to this pretended Body of Christ: They *speak perverse things* about it; Humane Decrees have establish'd it upon humane Penalties; 'tis safer contradicting any Article of Religion than *that.* Inquisitions, that carry in their Bowels all the Varieties of Cruelty, are a Trench set about this Doctrine.

If they would *dispute about the Body of Jesus*, as
Jude ix. *Michael* the Archangel did *about the Body of Moses*, they must *bring no railing Accusation*; but they use worse Language to their Brethren than he did to the Devil. 'Tis very different from the Methods of the Gospel, when Objections are answer'd by Racks and Fires. Nay, where the Laws have restrain'd them from these Severities, there cannot be a Procession of the Host, without a *Church Mob*, insulting all those that don't come into their Idolatry. And what a confus'd Assembly must that be, that are zealous both in Adoration and Violence; that is equally a House of Prayer, and a Den of Thieves? One Party falling down themselves, and another Party knocking down others; and this in the greatest Solemnity of their Worship? As if a more extraordinary Devotion could not be carry'd on, but in this jumbled way, by the Superstition of their Bigots, and the Insolence of their Bullies. Their Procession in celebrating his Death is not unlike that of the *Jews* in con-
Mat. xxvi. 47. triving it. *Judas one of the Twelve came, and with him a great Multitude with Swords and Staves, from the chief Priests and Elders of the People.* Such Offerings as these, are fitter for *Moloch* than for *Jesus.* The Former indeed allow'd all this, but of the Latter it is observ'd that his Carriage was the reverse to

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these riotous Devotions, for *he did not strive, nor try, nor cause his Voice to be heard in the Streets.* And he will be serv'd in his own way. The Apostle gave a very different Account of himself from what these Sons of Violence can pretend to, *they found me purify'd in the Temple neither with Multitude nor with Tumult.* These Confusions are the Fruit of that vile Doctrine, and by their Fruits we are to know 'em.

Mat. xii. 19.

Act. xxiv. 12.

3. THE Mysteries of Religion have not only a Tendency to promote Godliness, but they give the best Influence to it. It never prospers so well as under the Impressions of this Faith. *It is the Spirit that quickens, the Flesh profits nothing, these Words of God they are Spirit and they are Life.* Morality without Revelation is starv'd and wither'd; it wants either more Vigour or more Comfort. But *they that are planted in the House of the Lord, shall flourish in the Courts of our God.* Here I shall endeavour to do these two Things.

Joh. vi. 63.

Ps. xcii. 10.

1. GIVE you some Account of this Godliness; and

2. SHOW you how the Mysteries of Religion have a happy Influence upon it.

1. WHAT is the Godliness here mention'd? Looking into this will give us an Argument of those Doctrines that promote it. If we find, that the Practice they put us upon is the most useful to our selves and others, we shall the more esteem them. I take the Word εὐσέβεια to be of great Extent, and to include the whole of our Duty, though it has the nearest Relation to what lies between us and God. In particular, it signifies our Worship of him, our Likeness to him, our Communion with him, our Expectations from him, our Regard to his Institutions, our love to his People, and our Usefulness to his Creatures. These are so many Beauties of Holiness, and Orna-

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ments of Practice. *He that in these Things serves Christ is acceptable to God, and approv'd of Men.* And you will find they sink and die when we abate of our Relish for the Mysteries of Religion. No sort of People are so grosly deficient in their Morals as they that despise the Doctrines of Christianity.

Rom. xiv. 18.

1. One Article of Godliness, and indeed the chief of them, is that we should bow down, *and worship before the Lord our Maker.* When God looked from Heaven, upon that enquiry, to *see if there were any that did understand and seek him,* the Report is that *they are altogether become filthy, there's none that does good, they eat up his People as they eat Bread, and do not call on the Lord.* It is the Unhappiness of the Heathen World, that they are *alienated from the Life of God through the Ignorance that is in them:* Or, if *they know God, they glorify him not as God, but become vain in their Imaginations, and their foolish Heart is darkned.* Our Saviour tells the *Samaritans* that *they worship'd they know not what.* But the most lamentable account is that which the Apostle gives, that these People are *without Christ, aliens to the Commonwealth of* Israel, *strangers to the covenant of Promise, having no hope and without a God in the World:* paying no respect to him who was their Author and will be their Judge; never *feeling after him, if haply they might find him.* But acting as if they carry'd brutal Souls in humane Bodies.

Ps. xcv. 6. xiv. 3, 4. Eph. iv. 18. Rom. i. 21. Joh. iv. 22. Eph. ii. 12.

This is the first Thing that the Grace of God does, it brings us to our Knees. *Men and Brethren what shall we do to be saved?* Was the Cry of those who a little before were hardned against all Salvation, and had the utmost Contempt of the Means that God appointed for it. The Jailor, whose Conscience was cover'd with a Brawniness, Braveness from his calling, comes trembling with the same Question. 'Tis observ'd of *Saul,* that he quickly fell to this work, *behold he prays.* It may be they who led him by the Hand to *Damascus,* knew

Acts ii. 37. Acts ix. 11.

knew not what he was doing; they only beheld him a miserable Object, a moving Spectacle that could not lye and durst not eat for three Days and three Nights; but in this heavy Darkness he found his way to the Throne of Grace. His desires were feeding and fetching from above, though he made such a sad Figure to those about him. SERM. VIII.

This is Godliness: *If you call on the Father who without Respect of Persons will judge every Man according to his work, pass the Time of your sojourning here in fear*, as those that are *born not of the corruptible Seed, but the incorruptible.* This is the great Business of Religion to *seek the Lord whilst he may be found, and call upon him whilst he is near.* There's no Piety without this. Let not any deceive themselves, Religion does not consist so much in talking of God as in talking to him. *With my Soul have I desir'd thee in the Night*, saith the Prophet, *and with my Spirit within me I will seek thee early. The way of the Just is Uprightness*; that is, his Habit, his Choice, his Course, his Inclination, and *thou most upright dost weigh the Path of the just.* 'Tis under thy notice, and it is directed to thy Throne. There are all manner of Considerations that should move us to this; the debt we owe to a Creator, the necessity that is upon us from the daily Deficiences of Life, and more especially the interest of Immortality in another World, which can be pursued in no better a way. All these the grace of God sets home: those People may be supposed to *cast of Fear who restrain Prayer before God.* 'Tis this Duty that the Principles of the Christian Doctrine are to promote.

1 Pet. i. 17, 23. Isa. lii. 6. xxvi. 79. Job xv. 2.

2. OUR Likeness to God. Godliness is God's Likeness. This may be consider'd both as the Cause and the Effect of the other. Our Conformity to him makes us serve him, for *how shall two walk together except they be agreed?* And our Service makes us more like him; *We look through a Glass, and are chang'd into*

Amos iii. 3. 2 Cor. iii. 18.

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into the same Image from Glory to Glory. 'Tis the Command that he has laid down, *Be ye holy, for I*
1 Pet. i. 15. *am holy.* And *he that has this Hope in him will puri-*
1 Joh. iii. 3. *fy himself even as he is pure.*

The best Influence to this comes from the Principles of the Christian Doctrine. The clearest view that we can have of the divine Perfections is from a
Joh. i. 18. *God manifest in the Flesh. No Man has seen the Father at any Time, but the only Begotten who is in*
2 Cor. iv. *the Bosom of the Father, he has revealed him.* In him
Col. i. 15. we have *the Image of the invisible God.*

This is a true and noble Notion of Religion, that it's a Conformity to him that made us. *We are his Workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus unto good*
Eph. iv. 23, 24. *Works. We put on the new Man in the Image of him that created us.* Some sort of People are fond of being *called Gods.* They would gladly suppose themselves to have his *Power*; but it would be more their Interest to imitate his Purity and Goodness. Supremacy and Infallibility are not what he has imputed
Ps. cxlvii. 5. to any. *Great is our Lord and of great Power, his Understanding is infinite.* These we are not to learn of him; but he has propos'd his other Attributes to our Esteem and Practice, to be gracious, holy, just, and true. It's only in this Sense, that we are to be
Mat. v. 48. *perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect.*

3. GODLINESS consists in a Communion with
Cant. viii. 12. God; which is the exchange of *Love*, between him and us. We delight our selves in his great Goodness; and the Satisfaction we receive from his Love as a Bounty is return'd to him as an Offering. On his part, this is promoted by engaging our Graces, pouring afresh into our Comforts, and drawing us out after himself. On our Part, it is pursued in Desires towards him, Admirations of him, for the Glory of his Nature, the Lowness of his Condescension; for what he is, and what he does. It sometimes rises into joyful Assurances that he is ours and we

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are his; and these are still more powerful as the Soul flies up with them into a better World, where we are not only to have a Glory *from* Christ, but a Glory *with* him. SERM. VIII.

This Satisfaction may well be called Religion, because it comes no other way. These are Joys that no Stranger intermeddles with. If our Joys are separated from a Life of Holiness, Humility and Peace, they are False and Counterfeit. An angry passionate Favourite is a Contradiction; God indulges no pettish Children in his Family, though he may not cast 'em out of the House, yet he carries it with a Coldness to them. I have known some Christians very courageous in Dangers, and very liberal in Charities, who have scarce enjoy'd a common Peace within, because of a sour and morose Temper. The Apostle saith, *though I bestow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and tho' I give my Body to be burned, and have not Charity, it profits me nothing.* God usually deals with his own Children as they do with others. *With the merciful thou wilt show thy self merciful, and with the froward thou wilt show thy self froward.* Nothing more *grieves the Spirit of God* than the rising of an inward Passion. If you would be *seal'd to the Day of Redemption* you must *put away Clamour, and Malice, and Anger, and Evil-speaking.* This is Religion; and it is a delightful Part of it, to *seek the Lord and his Strength, to seek his Face evermore, that your Heart may live for ever. It is good,* saith David, *for me to draw nigh unto God. My Soul shall be satisfy'd as with Marrow and Fatness, and my Mouth shall praise him with joyful Lips.* 1 Cor. xiii. Ps. xcviii. 25. Eph. iv. 30, 31. Ps. cv. 4. lxxiii. 28. lxiii. 5.

4. THIS same Godliness takes into it our Expectation from God. *We are sav'd by hope, but Hope that is seen is not Hope, for what a Man sees, why does he yet hope for? But then do we hope, if we with Patience wait for it.* Most of our dealings with God are about things to come. We desire he would give us Rom. viii. 24, 25.

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our *daily Bread, and forgive us our Debts,* and not suffer us to be *led into Temptation*; but in all this we are *looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.* When our Hearts are *directed into the Love of God,* it is also into a *patient waiting for the coming of Christ.* We have not yet receiv'd our Portion: He that has put us among the Children will give us a delightful Heritage. *We that are in this Tabernacle do groan being burden'd:* And it will be thus with us till we are *cloath'd upon with our House that is from Heaven. We walk by Faith and not by Sight*; and therefore *whilst we are at home in the Body we must be absent from the Lord.* We are waiting to *see the King in his Beauty,* and be brought into the Land that is now afar off.

Tit. ii. 13.

2 Thes. iii. 5.

2 Cor. v. 1, 2.

7, 8.

There is, and perhaps there always will be some Dread of Death. The breaking down of this Tabernacle is an Act of Violence. Sickness has a awful way of pulling out the Pins, and taking the Frame to Pieces. We ought to use all means for lengthening of Life: 'Tis not only the Voice of Nature, but of Religion. For which Reason I cannot but think, that a late Author in his Ecclesiastical History has misrepresented the primitive Christians about their Zeal in pushing on Martyrdom; that was no Business of theirs. We have but two Examples in the Bible of good Men desiring to dye rather than live, and each of them are blam'd for it.

Nevertheless, as *the living know that they shall dye,* so there can be no Religion that does not keep up a Trade with another World. *Our Conversation is in Heaven.* We are *waiting for the Grace that shall be brought to us at the Revelation of Jesus Christ. We look for his second Appearance.* Our Eyes are taken off from *things that are seen, which are but temporal,* and fix'd upon *those that are not seen which are eternal.*

Phil. iii. 20.

1 Pet. i. 13.

Heb. ix. 28.

2 Cor. iv. 18.

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5. GODLINESS takes into it our Regard to the Divine Inſtitutions. We muſt *call the Sabbath a Delight, the holy of the Lord and honourable.* People may abound with Arguments againſt the Obligation of the Command, and ſtrive to bend their Judgment to their Practice; but the Grace of God teaches us to look upon it as an *accepted Time*, and *a day of Salvation.* There's no Worſhip of God, but in the way that he has appointed. We are to *continue* not only *in the Apoſtles Doctrine*, but *in their Fellowſhip, in breaking of Bread and in Prayers.* Therefore that Perſon gives himſelf a Liberty of uſing *vain Words*, who talks of Chriſtianity, and yet can *turn away his Ear from hearing the Law, finding his Pleaſure on God's Holy Day.* They that are above Ordinances are above Grace. The Generation of Seekers enquire where God may be found. He has been known by the breaking of Bread, and *manifeſted the good Savour of his Knowledge by preaching.* And upon this Practice the Myſteries of Religion have a powerful Influence.

Iſa. lviii. 13.

Acts ii. 46.

6. GODLINESS takes into it our Love to godly People. There muſt be a ſocial Religion; *not forſaking the aſſembling of our ſelves together, but conſidering one another to provoke unto Love and good Works, and ſo much the more as you ſee the Day approaching.* The Temper that teaches ſurpercilious Language, *ſtand by thy ſelf, for I am holier than thou*, is ſo far from being right, that it gives God the quickeſt offence; *Theſe are a Smoak in his Noſe, and a Fire that burns all the Day.* The Grace of God gives us a Similitude both to him that made us, and to thoſe who have obtained the like precious Faith with us. All the Whims of Popery that ſeparate People from the Converſation of the World, and throw them into a moroſe retirement, are as unchriſtian as they are inhuman. And therefore we ought to abhor them as ways of making us uſeleſs, or at the beſt, like Iſrael, *an empty Vine* that brought forth *Fruit to it ſelf.*

Heb. x. 25.

Iſa. lxv. 5: 6.

Hoſ. x. 1.

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7. OUR Usefulness to those who are *yet without* is no small part of Religion. To this we have the Example of our gracious God, who causes his Sun to shine upon the just and the unjust. As he was mindful of us in our low Estate, so should we be
Rom. v. 6. 8. of others, *When we were without Strength, and yet Sinners, Christ died for the Ungodly. He receiv'd Gifts,*
Psal. lxviii 18. *even for the Rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them.* As you have been as bad as they, how do you know but they may in Time be as good as you? and if it is not so, there must be the utmost care to preserve the ways of God in full Reputation, that they may have *no evil thing to say of you.* This
Jam. i. 27. is Godliness, *pure Religion and undefiled before God and our Father, to visit the Fatherless and the Widow, and to keep your selves unspotted from the World.* A good
Phil. ii. 15. 1 6. Man is an useful one. The Sons of God are *blameless and harmless, without Rebuke, in the midst of a corrupt and perverse Generation, among whom they are as Lights in the World; holding forth the Word of Life.*

August 3. 1718.

SERMON IX.

II. WE shall now enquire how this Godliness, as it comprehends our Duty to God and our Beneficence to Man, is promoted by the Mysteries of Religion. How do these Things fill us with Reverence and a godly Fear; and teach us to *do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God?* I might consider the two Branches of Holiness apart, and let you see that they are both of them much improv'd by the Doc-
Tit. ii. 12. 13, 14. trines of the Gospel. That *the Grace of God which brings Salvation teaches us to deny Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, and to live soberly* as to our selves, *righteously as*

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to our Neighbour, and *godly* in the Acts of Devotion; and that, these Beauties of practice are all maintain'd and heighten'd by our *looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify to himself a People that are zealous of good works.*

BUT I shall not consider these things asunder. I will only give you a few particulars, in which you will see, there could be no approach to God, and no true service to Men, if our Religion was not so mysterious as infinite Wisdom has appointed it: That is, if GOD was not *manifest* in the Flesh, *justified* in the Spirit, *believ'd* on in the World, and *receiv'd* up into Glory. It is only by this that we know of a way open'd to the Throne of Grace. 'Tis thus that we are fill'd with a Reverence for the Divine Majesty; by these means he creates the principle of *our* Love which is no other than a return of Gratitude to *his:* We find by experience that this makes the worship of God our Delight and Pleasure; In this we have the greatest Examples of our Duty, are most inspir'd with Hope, fill'd with Charity to those with whom we differ, and a true Value for them with whom we agree. Thus it appears that Christianity is a Mystery of Godliness; that it forms and adorns the Practice of those that believe it. There are none of it's Doctrines which do not infuse into these Rules that Life that makes them more powerful and pleasant.

1. WERE it not for these Mysteries we could not have had an open way to the Throne of Grace. *Faith is the Evidence of Things not seen*, and yet *without this Faith*, which supposes a Revelation, *it is impossible to please God.* It seems to be the universal Language of our Nature, that *all Flesh have sinn'd and fall'n short of the Glory of God.* We cannot but fear that he is a God of Truth and without Iniquity. These are the eternal Glories of his Nature, without which he could not be the Object of our Reverence, and

Heb. xi. 1. —6.

Rom. iii. 23.

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Sinners cannot think of them without a Dread. *In thy sight shall no Man living be justify'd.* That ever
Ps. cxliii. 2. was, and ever will be, the painful Query of an awa-
Mic. vi. 6. 7. ken'd Conscience, *wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self to the most high God?* For this some People will stick at no Expence or Cruelty. *Shall I come with thousands of Rams, and ten thousand Rivers of Oyl? Shall I give my first born for my Transgression, the Fruit of my Body for the Sin of my Soul?* In these sorrowful Confusions must they have wander'd to the end of the World, if God had not reveal'd his Love, and show'd them better ways of approach than ever they could have thought of; *Ac-*
Eph. iii. 11, 12. *cording to the eternal Purpose which he purpos'd in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have Boldness and Access with Confidence by the Faith of him.*

We could not come to God as *Adam* did, who had two things to recommend him, the Purity of his Nature, and the Perfection of his Obedience. *We*
Isa. lxiv. 6. *are all an unclean thing, and our Righteousnesses as filthy Rags.* Our Persons are vile, and our Actions provoking.
Job xiv. 4. *Who can bring a clean Thing out of an unclean? not one.* The Angels who were our Companions in Paradise became the terrible Guards of the Place, and Enemies to the old Inhabitants. There was no getting by that *flam-*
Gen. iii. 24. *ming Sword that turn'd every way to keep the way of the Tree of Life.* And therefore, as all the former Passages were block'd up, God is said to *consecrate a new and*
Heb. x. 20. *a living way through the Vail, that is the Flesh* of Christ. To this he has given a Consecration; he has made it *holy.* Our Inventions at the best were Uncertainties, whether they would do or no we could not tell; but upon this Way he has put a royal Stamp. 'Tis what his own Holiness has open'd. Then it is a *new way*, as distinguish'd from that which our Iniquity had clos'd up; and lastly, it is *a living way*, as it gives Life to those that come into it, and as it endures for ever.

Now all this is brought about by the first Branch of the Mystery of Godliness, *God was manifest in the Flesh.*

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Flesh. Without that we must for ever have continu'd in the State of our first Parents, driven out from God; from the Habitation of his Holiness, from a Concern with his Love, and any further Expectations of his Bounty. Nay, our Case would have been the same with that of Devils. They are better at contriving ways of return to God, than we can pretend to, and yet it is past all their Cunning to find out any Door of Hope. But *having left their Habitations* once, they have left them for ever, and are *reserv'd in everlasting Chains under Darkness to the Judgment of the great Day.* 2 Pet. ii. 4.

THE Reason why it is not so with us as it is with them, must be all resolv'd into those Things that we call the Mystery of Religion; that *God has sent forth his Son in the likeness of sinful Flesh*; that he is *the Way, the Truth and the Life. No Man comes to the Father but by him. Being justify'd by Faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by Faith into this Grace wherein we stand.* He has join'd the two main Principles of natural and reveal'd Religion together, that *there is but one God, and one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus.* Without this there must have been an eternal Bar in our way; for *God hears not Sinners*; He is of *purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, or look on them that do evil.* And what does this conclude for us, but that we have no Hope and must live as without a God in the World? Had it not been for our High-Priest, who is gone by his own Blood into the holy Place, we could not have come with *Boldness to the Mercy-Seat, in hopes of obtaining Mercy and finding Grace to help in every time of need.* Rom. viii. 3. Joh. xiv. 6. Rom. v. 1, 2. 1 Tim. ii. 5. Joh. ix. 31. Heb. i. 13. Heb. iv. 16.

2. ANOTHER Principle of Godliness which the Mysteries of Religion do improve is a Reverence of the Divine Majesty. I need not stay to argue the necessity of approaching in this manner to infinite Perfection. *Great fear is due to the Lord in the Assembly of his Saints, and he is to be had in reverence of* Ps. lxxxix. 7.

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all that are about him. But my particular aim under this Head, is to shew you, that the Revelation he makes of himself in the Gospel gives the most useful Impressions upon every Man's Conscience. *If thou shouldst mark Iniquity, who could stand? But there is Forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared. Who is a strong Lord like unto thee, and to thy Faithfulness round about thee! We have obtain'd a Kingdom that cannot be moved, and therefore have Grace to serve God acceptably with Reverence and a Godly Fear.* The *Promises* that we have receiv'd engage us to *perfect Holiness in the Fear of God.*

Ps. cxxx. 3, 4. Ixxxix. 8. Heb. xii. 28. 2 Cor. vii. 1.

He never makes such an awful appearance as in the Scheme of Redemption. They that sing the Song of *Moses*, and of the Lamb, say, *Great and marvellous are thy Works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are all thy Ways, thou King of Saints, who shall not fear thee and glorify thy Name!* His riding upon the Clouds, and having his way in the Whirlwind and in the Storm, is not so much as his *dwelling between the Cherubims. He is terrible out of his holy Places*, from whence he *gives Strength and Power to his People.* When he *rules the raging of the Sea, and stills the Waves thereof*; when he *broke* Rahab *in pieces as one that is slain, and scatter'd his Enemies with a strong Arm*, they were mighty Things; but the *Justice and Judgment* by which our Redemption is brought about, *are the Habitation of his Throne*, the Attributes that dwell in his Glory; *Mercy and Truth shall go before his Face.* When it is said of our Lord that *Men shall be blessed in him, and all Nations shall call him blessed*, the pious Remark upon it is, *blessed be the Lord God, the God of* Israel *who only does wondrous Things.* We find in Fact that no People are so touch'd with a Sense of his Majesty as they who have been enquiring after a Share in his Love.

Rev. xv. 3, 4. Ps. lxviii. 35. lxxxix. 9, 10. Ps. lxxii. 17, 18.

The Dread that Mankind are struck into by the noise of Storms and Thunder deserves not the Name of Devotion. *They that dwell in the uttermost parts*

Ps. lxv. 8.

are

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are afraid of his Tokens, but this does not lead them to worship. No Person does rightly believe that *God is*, but one that believes he *is the Rewarder of them* Heb. xi. 6. *that diligently seek him*. We cannot suppose that *Isaiah* was unacquainted with those Arguments that are fetch'd out of Nature in Proof of the Divine Perfections, and the Duty we owe to them; and yet he is mov'd by a Vision of another sort. He *saw the* Isa. vi. 1. *Lord upon a Throne high and lifted up*. If an Evangelist may be the Interpreter of a Prophet, the Lord that he saw was the Lord Redeemer, for *those Things said* Esaias *when he saw his Glory and spake of him. His Train filled the Temple*, which shows that he came Joh. xii. 43. to restore the worship of God, to establish a Correspondence between Heaven and Earth. In this Design he was *seen of Angels*; He is ador'd by them in the higher Apartments of his House. *Above it* i. e. above this Throne *stood the Seraphims, each one* —ver. 2. *had six Wings, with Twain he cover'd his Face, with Twain he cover'd his Feet, and with Twain he did fly. One cry'd to another*; or, as the *Hebrew* Word is, *this cryed to this*, they handed the Adoration round, put it into an eternal Circle, *saying, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole Earth is full of his Glory*. Nay, the very unfeeling parts of Nature receive the Impression of this Greatness, *the posts of the Door mov'd at the Voice of him that cried, and the House was fill'd with Smoke*.

This was a happy Vision to the Prophet, because thence he concluded that the Purpose of Redemption held good: That, here was a sufficient Attendance of Angels and the Display of a God to make it effectual. But instead of talking over those Joys that he is suppos'd to feel, he looks upon it as the most awful Appearance of Divinity. He is presently fill'd with a sense of his Vanity and Wickedness; of every distance between him and a God so great and so holy. *Then said I, wo is me, for I am undone*. What! does he think himself undone by the

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Visions of Grace and Mercy? No! I don't take that to be the cry of Despair; but this was such a Representation of God in his Power and his Purity as he had never met with before. *I am of unclean Lips, and I dwell in the midst of a People of unclean Lips, for mine Eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.* Had he never seen him before; in his Works of Nature and Providence? Was this the first time that he thought him to be the Lord of Hosts, Lord of the Armies in Heaven, and the Inhabitants on the Earth? No; but the Divine Majesty was never so open'd to him as in the disclosure of a Redeemer.

We need look no farther than our daily Observation for a Proof of this. The Fear of God, and a Faith in Jesus go together. We *walk before him in Holiness and Righteousness*, under the *Knowledge of Salvation that he has given to his People in the remission of their Sins, through the tender Mercy of our God.* How is the Deity treated by those that despise Revelation? How grossly deficient are they in their Homage to him! who are more ready to blaspheme his Name, to neglect his Ordinances and lay aside even that Practice which all Nature has confessed to be his due? On the other hand, how does a Knowledge of the Truth as it is in Jesus affect those that have it? In what manner do they think and speak of God? Is it with the Freedom and Sawciness that are charg'd upon their Principles? Are they too familiar with him? No, 'tis plain they dare not do what they are accus'd of, but *tremble at his Word.* And thus you see, that the Reverence, without which, there can be no agreeable Worship, is promoted by the Mysteries of our Religion.

Luk. i. 75, 77.

3. 'Tis in the Belief of these Doctrines that we feel the Principles of *our* Love to God, which are but the rebound of *his* to us. *We love him because he first loved us.* This we see in the Mystery of Redemption. Had he pardon'd us without any Satisfaction, it would not only have wrong'd his Justice, but

1 Joh. iv. 19.

but obscur'd his Mercy. Had there been a Remission of Sins without shedding of Blood, we must have admir'd his Goodness at a lower rate than we do now. For *herein has God commended his Love towards us in that whilst we were yet Sinners, Christ died for us. In this was manifested the Love of God towards us, because that God sent forth his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him. Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins.* The very price of our Redemption as well as the Thing it self, is an Argument of the Divine Goodness. That he should furnish out all the Expence of his own Satisfaction: That he himself should *find out a Ransom* is a great deal more kind than if he had broke in upon his Justice, and given us our Happiness without any regard to *that* at all. We value the Love that bestows a Salvation, not merely by what the Thing *is*, but by what it *cost*, *the precious Blood of the Son of God as a Lamb without Blemish and without Spot.*

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Rom. v. 8.

1 Joh. iv. 9, 10.

Job xxxiii. 24.

1 Pet. i. 19.

Now, the more we see God's Love the more do we feel our own: And this must ever be the noblest Principle of all Duty. What we do with Love looks like a heavenly Action: When we are *constrain'd* with this, it makes Obedience easy and delightful: It rushes through every Impediment of Nature and Temptation; it sets us above the World whilst we are in it; and for this we could have no such Argument as we are now possess'd of, were it not for the Revelation that is given us in the Gospel. Here we are led to design, to venture, to pursue all for God, who has left so much for us. *I count all Things but loss for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffer'd the loss of all Things, and do count them but Dung that I may win Christ: knowing him, the Power of his Resurrection, and the Fellowship of his Suffering.* From his dying for us, we are willing to be crucify'd to the World; to all the Offers that it makes, and all the Diversions that it gives.

2 Cor. v. 15.

Phil. iii. 8, 9, 10.

This

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This has been a Principle of Duty to the Martyrs; In the Force of that they *accepted not of Deliverance, that they might obtain a better Reſurrection.* It was in view of what Chriſt had done and ſuffer'd that they lov'd him ſo powerfully, *not loving their own Lives unto the Death.*

Heb. xi. 35.

Rev. xii. 11.

4. We find by Experience that this makes the Worſhip of God our Delight and Pleaſure. *Our Hearts are knit together and comforted unto the Riches of the full Aſſurance of Underſtanding, to the acknowledgment of the Myſtery of God, and of the Father and of Chriſt.* The Vail upon the Jews will be *done away in Chriſt;* and, *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty.* It is owing to this, that in all Devotion, *We behold with open Face, the Glory of the Lord;* the greateſt Manifeſtation that he is making of himſelf to a loſt World. Hence it is that others have taken notice that *we have been with Jeſus.* We *glory in his holy Name, for the Heart of them will rejoyce that ſeek the Lord.*

Col. ii. 2.

2 Cor. iii. 14.

Acts iv. 13.

Pſ. cv. 3.

Mere bowing before him that made us, and begging his Favour is the duller part of a Believer's Work; a *Boldneſs to enter into the Holieſt of all, through the Blood of Jeſus, is his Principle and his Glory.* He's introduc'd by one who is *fairer than the Sons of Men. To him to live is Chriſt.* His Saviour is not only the way to the Father, but *altogether lovely, the choiceſt among ten thouſand.* He draws us that we may *run after him;* The King *brings us into his Chambers,* where we are glad in him; *He is held in his Galleries, He dwells in the Gardens, and the Companions hear his Voice.* We have *taſted* this *Lord to be gracious, and come to him as a living Stone,* to have more of that Experience; He was *diſallow'd* indeed *of Men, but he is choſen of God and precious.* We ſhould loſe our reliſh of an Ordinance, if the Love and Kindneſs of God our Saviour had not appear'd. *We have thought of thy loving Kindneſs, O God, in the midſt of thy Temple; according to thy Name, O God, ſo is thy Praiſe to the ends of the Earth.* We ſee by a daily Obſervation, how the Truth as it is in Jeſus has a mighty

Heb. x. 19.

Pſ. xlv. 3.

Phil. i. 21.

Cant. v. 10.

—i. 4.

—vii. 5.

1 Pet. ii. 3, 4.

Pſ. xlviii. 9, 10.

a mighty Influence. It makes us joyful in the Houſe of Prayer. *His Name is as Ointment poured forth. His Love we remember more than Wine.* Had he not been manifeſted in the Fleſh, and dwelt among us, we might have worſhip'd God, but could never have had any of that Pleaſure, that make *his Yoke to be eaſy, and his Burden light.* SERM. IX. Cant. i. 3. 4. Mat. xi. 30.

5. IN this Revelation we have the greateſt and beſt Examples of our Duty. By the Manifeſtation of God in the Fleſh, we have the higheſt of all; the Obedience of Chriſt *magnified the Law and made it honourable.* And beſides that, it is eaſy to ſhow that without theſe Doctrines we could not have had thoſe noble Patterns that God has given us in ſeveral Ages. It was with a regard to theſe that they of old have done their Duty, ſerv'd their Generation, and fall'n aſleep in Peace. *Of this Salvation the Prophets enquir'd and ſearch'd diligently, who propheſy'd of the Grace that ſhould come unto us: ſearching what, or what manner of Time the Spirit of Chriſt which was in them did ſignify, when it teſtify'd before hand the Sufferings of Chriſt and the Glory that ſhould follow: Unto whom it was revealed that not unto themſelves, but to us they did miniſter the Things that are now reported by them that have preached the Goſpel among us.* It is by this Faith that *the Elders obtain'd a good report.* We are thus *compaſs'd about with a great Cloud of Witneſſes*, who are well ſpoke of, God has *teſtified of their Gifts, they have obtained Witneſs that they were righteous.* In the Belief of theſe Things, *the Sufferings of Chriſt and the Glory* that ſhould follow, they have *wrought Righteouſneſs, ſubdued Kingdoms, quench'd the violence of Fire, eſcap'd the edge of the Sword, ſtopped the Mouths of Lyons, out of Weakneſs were made ſtrong, waxed valiant in Fight, and turn'd to Flight the Armies of the Aliens.* 1 Pet. i. 10, 11, 12. Heb. xi. 2. —xii. 1.

THIS has in latter Ages given People a Courage in the Field that no Terror could daunt, and a Faithfulneſs in Council that no Bribes could pervert. But what is there of thoſe ſocial Virtues in thoſe who *denyed*

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ed the Lord that bought them? As they like not to retain God in their Knowledge; he gives them over to a reprobate Mind, being fill'd with all Unrighteousness, Fornication, Wickedness, Covetousness, Maliciousness; full of Envy, Murder, Debate, Deceit, Malignity, Whisperers, Back-biters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, Boasters, Inventers of evil Things, Disobedient to Parents, without Understanding, Covenant-Breakers, without natural Affection, Implacable, Unmerciful. The Apostle complains that *all Men love their own, not the Things of Jesus Christ*, and by his way of judging you may conclude, that those People who hate and despise the Things of *Jesus Christ* do only love *their own.* They are for themselves entirely. As they serve not the Lord *Jesus, they serve their own Belly.* The great Men who *knew not the way of the Lord, and the Judgment of their God, have altogether broken the Yoke, and burst the Bonds.* 'Tis only among Believers that we *find* those who have liv'd with Credit, and died with Peace. As they did not make *Shipwreck of Faith*, they did not make *Shipwreck of a good Conscience.* They have born down the Temptations of Honours, Places, and Rewards; *chosing rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a Season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater Riches than all the Treasures of Egypt: Because they had respect to the Recompence of reward, and endur'd as seeing him who is invisible.*

Rom. i. 28, 29, 30, 31.

Phil. ii. 21.

Rom. xvi. 18.

Jer. v. 5.

Heb. xi. 25, 26, 27.

6. By this they were inspir'd with Hope. They went out of the World with no Reluctance at their being so indifferent to it. *They desir'd a better Country that is an heavenly. They rejoyc'd in Hope of the Glory of God.* He distinguish'd them at their Death. *Mark the perfect Man, and behold the upright, for the end of that Man is Peace.* They did not die stupid or frighted, as they must have done, if they had paid no regard to the Mysteries of Religion. That which raised them above the Fears of Death was their *knowing in whom they believ'd*, that he transacted that whole affair of Redemption, and was therefore *able to keep what*

Heb. xi. 16.

Rom. v. 2.

Ps. xxxvii. 37.

2 Tim i. 12.

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what they had committed to him against that Day. They look'd forward to the Day which is so often call'd *the Day of Christ.* They had put something into his Hands, and had those apprehensions of his perfection as to think he was able to keep it: That nothing entrusted with him shall be lost.

AND is it not good following such as those through the cross Turns of Life, and at last through the Valley of the Shadow of Death? Is it not very desirable to dye as they did, who *fear'd no ill,* having God to be with them, *his Rod and his Staff to comfort 'em?* Psal. xxiii. 4. They had no Reluctance in saying, *Lord Jesus receive my Spirit.* Acts viii. 59. They look'd unto him *as the Author and Finisher of Faith.* Heb. xi. 2. They knew that upon the belief *that Jesus died and rose again, that those who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him,* and that made them look upon Death as a Passage by which they went to be *ever with the Lord.* 2 Thes. iv. 14.

7. THIS has given good People a Principle of Charity to those that differ from them, and the truest Value for those with whom they are agreed. *Speaking the Truth in Love they grow up unto him in all Things who is the Head even Christ, from whom the whole Body fitly join'd together increases to the edifying of it self in Love.* Eph. iv. 15, 16. As a Mystery is above the Comprehension of humane Reason we can only receive it upon a divine Testimony. *Flesh and Blood has not reveal'd it, but our Father who is in Heaven.* This should give us a Pity for others, who as yet are in Darkness and see no Light. It will keep us from the *Paths of the Destroyer,* and every thing that looks like penal Authority. He that thinks to drive in the Christian Religion by humane Laws, knows nothing what belongs to it.

IF I should force a *Mahometan,* it would be scandalous to Christianity, because if ever he's convinc'd it is owing to a Light that we cannot give him. We must in *Meekness instruct those that oppose themselves, if peradventure God will give them Repentance to the Acknowledging* 2 Tim. ii. 25.

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knowledging of the Truth. If *no Man can ſay, that Jeſus is Lord but by the Holy Ghoſt*, throwing a Man into Jayls and turning, him out of Places for not *ſaying ſo* is a Reflection upon the Holy Ghoſt for not doing his Office. As for Men who ſubſcribe Articles that they never think of, and mean no more by Orthodoxy than a Title to Preferment, it will be eaſy enough to them; though they are *deſtitute of the Truth*, they ſuppoſe that *Gain is Godlineſs*. And, perhaps, theſe will find no ſcruple to come into hard Meaſures againſt thoſe who differ from them. But he that does Juſtice to the Myſtery of any Doctrine will be of Opinion, that as Men cannot give Faith, ſo Men ſhould not pretend to reward it. This teaches us to *love, not in Word or in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth; and hereby we ſhall know that we are of the Truth, and ſhall aſſure our Hearts before him.*

1 Cor. xii. 3.

1 Joh. iii. 18, 19.

If you pleaſe in our Day to examine the different Tempers with which revealed Religion is maintain'd and oppos'd, you will find whether of them is the Wiſdom that deſcends from above. There is among ſome People, a Scorn of all thoſe who give up their Reaſons to a Divine Inſtruction. They are treated as Fools and Blind, who take Things upon Truſt, and are denied the Title that every honeſt Man ought to have of being a *free Thinker*. The Belief of what God has told us, is ſpoke of with Contempt: as if Faith in him was the Deſtruction of Reaſon in our ſelves; ſo it was of old. That which is call'd the *Arian* Perſecution was one of the greateſt the Church of God ever felt: And I muſt freely declare my Opinion that all the late Arguments for Liberty are inconſiſtent with the Language of Reproach and Inſolence that come out of the ſame Mouths. If People are not to be perſecuted for ſaying there are *no Myſteries in* Religion, they ought not to be laught at, and treated with Scorn for ſaying *there are*. For *cruel Mockings* are as really Perſecution as any Thing in the World can be. The Apoſtle calls it ſo, *He that is born after the Fleſh perſecutes*

Gal. iv. 29.

perſecutes him that is born after the Spirit. The Caſe that he refers to is that of *Iſhmael*, who was guilty of no more to *Iſaac* than mocking him. I'm ſorry there is ſo much reaſon to fear, that if ſome had the Power they deſire, they who have exclaim'd ſo loudly againſt making *Newgate* the Place of Hereticks, would think *Bedlam* a proper Houſe for Believers: The Apoſtle could not give the Jews a worſe Name than that of *Deſpiſers*. But the Myſteries of our Religion are according to *Godlineſs*. When they are receiv'd in Truth, they make a Perſon humble in his own Eyes, and that, I'm ſure, is the beſt Ground of Peace, for *only by Pride comes Contention.* SERM. IX. Acts xiii. 41.

I WILL cloſe what you have heard with a ſhort APPLICATION.

1. IF theſe are Myſteries of *Godlineſs*, then you ſee the true ſpring of the Oppoſition that is made to 'em, not becauſe they are above reaſon, but becauſe they are againſt Corruption, and *hide Pride from Man.* One that walks humbly with his God cannot treat 'em with Scorn. But becauſe the practical part of the Bible bears hard upon Fleſh and Blood, that it may no longer be a *Rule.* Sinners will not ſuffer it to be a *Revelation. Men love Darkneſs rather than Light, becauſe their Deeds are evil; for every one that doth evil hates the Light, neither comes to the Light, leſt his Deeds ſhould be reprov'd.* This is bringing Religion lower than the Heathen did. They that *had not the Law*, i. e. a written one, *were a Law to themſelves, they had the Work of the Law written in their Hearts.* Theſe own'd a God; they profeſs'd that he ought to be worſhip'd; they had their Times of doing it, and ſuch as they always accounted Sacred. Swearing and living without Devotion were Things condemn'd even by their Light; divers Luſts and Pleaſures, ſome ſort of Impurities, were *not ſo much as named among the Gentiles.* Now, what is the Reaſon that the Bible is ſo much in contempt, but becauſe it has refin'd our Practice, in giving us a *Commandment that is holy, juſt, and good?* And that it may not have its Joh. iii. 19, 20. Rom. ii. 15. 1 Cor. v. 1. Rom. vii. 12.

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its Weight they deny its Myſteries. *They believe not the Truth who have Pleaſure in Unrighteouſneſs.*

2 Theſ. ii. 12.

2. LET us improve the Doctrines of Religion to this Purpoſe, to make us better as well as wiſer. Ask your ſelves upon the hearing of theſe Myſteries, what

Tit. ii. 10. will God have me to *do?* This is call'd *adorning the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all Things.* By that means you will live down the Reproach of Men, and they who believe not the word may without it be *won by your Converſation.* Let it be ſeen, that theſe are Myſteries of *Godlineſs;* that your Religion does conſiſt in

Rom. xiv. 17, 18. *Righteouſneſs, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt: He that in theſe Things ſerves Chriſt, is accepted of God, and approv'd of Men.* And, beſides, by this means

Joh. vii. 17. you will come to have a better Light. *He that does his Will ſhall know the Doctrine whether it be of God.* I ſhould ever have a great Value for that Notion that leads a Perſon to Prayer, and keeps him always humble. What theſe Doctrines are, I'm in the next Place to ſhow you, as you find them diſtributed into Six Particulars. GOD *was manifeſt in the Fleſh, juſtify'd in the Spirit, ſeen of Angels, preach'd unto the Gentiles, believ'd on in the World, and receiv'd up into Glory.*

SER-

SERMON X.

Aug. 17. 1718.

1 TIM. III. 16.

God was manifeſt in the Fleſh.

OUR Apoſtle having ſaid of the chriſtian religion, that it is *the pillar and ground of truth*; that it is a *myſtery* containing the deep things of God; and that it is a myſtery of *Godlineſs*, to form the practice, and fill the mind; in the latter part of the verſe he ſhews us, that this revelation is equal to the pompous account he has given us of it: *'Tis the glorious Goſpel of the bleſſed God.* Ch. i. 11. The particulars of this doctrine do every one of 'em anſwer the general characters that he had given of 'em all. We may take the account that he lays down under this diviſion.

Firſt, The Perſon he ſpeaks of is called GOD. This is the ſubject of the revelation. The chriſtian religion is a report of Him, who was *declar'd to be the Son of God with power.* Rom. i. 4.

Secondly, We have the ſeveral diſcoveries that he made of himſelf, which are no fewer than ſix; he was *manifeſt in the fleſh, juſtified in the Spirit, ſeen of Angels, preach'd unto the Gentiles, believ'd on in the world, and receiv'd up into glory.* Of theſe particulars you may obſerve two things,

1ſt, That they give us the ſeveral gradations of his power and love. One comes after another. They are ſo many ſtages of his appearance, comprehended in a hiſtory, that begins with his Incarnation, and ends with his Aſcending up on high. This
1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. is what he *delivered to the Corinthians* ἐν πρώτοις among the firſt and chief things, *that Chriſt died for our ſins, and that he was buried and roſe again the third day, according to the Scriptures.*

2dly, That they all relate to the happineſs of mankind, and the redemption that he came about; 'twas for his people that he put on fleſh, and put on glory. That he appear'd on earth, that he return'd to heaven, and went thro' all the intermediate parts of the hiſtory that is mention'd in my text. *For their ſakes he ſanctified himſelf, that*
Joh. xvii. 19. *they might be ſanctified thro' the truth.* Theſe are things that relate to us, the matter of our faith; the myſtery that God has given for our entertainment and practice. That the holineſs of his people may be carried on, he reveals what Chriſt has done from the extreme of humiliation to that of reward. This doctrine leads his people into a life of dependance and duty.

But before I enter upon this account of the words, we may conſider the objection that is rais'd againſt the doctrine contain'd in 'em. Inſtead of Θεὸς, which ſignifies *God*, there are two copies that have it Ὅ, which ſignifies *That* or *Which*; and ſo they refer it to the myſtery he had ſpoke of before that *This* was manifeſt in the fleſh, *&c.* But, beſides the teſtimony of all other ma-

nuscripts against these two, we need do no more than take the affirmation quite thro' the several particulars, and examine how properly these six things may be said of the Gospel. SERM. X.

'Tis with a great weight upon the phrase to say, that the Gospel is *justified in the Spirit.* The Spirit's revealing, explaining, and impressing it we understand, and if that's all they mean by the justification of the Gospel, 'tis a very odd way of conveying the notion. Then again, it is said to be *seen of Angels*, as they are ministers of providence, and help on the design of grace: It is made known to 'em; but whether this may be call'd their *seeing* it, I will leave any one to judge. It may indeed be referr'd to their contemplation of it *in heaven*, but how that comes to be a part of the mystery of godliness *to us*, I cannot imagine. That the Gospel is *preach'd unto the Gentiles, and believ'd on in the world*, is true enough, but I cannot apprehend how it is *manifest in the flesh.* That it is *manifest* we grant, because it's preach'd and believ'd; but what these words *in the flesh* have to do with it, is not so easie to be conceiv'd. And the last part of the character is more difficult than all the rest, how the Gospel should be *receiv'd up into glory.* This is at least an unusual way of talking: There's more mystery in the language than there is in the thing; and surely they who are against a mysterious doctrine, ought not to confound us with mysterious words. Besides the harshness of the interpretation, I would observe to you these two things,

1. That the whole paragraph is deliver'd in the form of a report, or a history. He tells us of that which is *already done.* This can hardly be said of the Gospel itself; for we must not speak of its being *manifest* as a thing that is *over*, ἐφανερώθη, because it still continues to be the light of the

SERM. X. world. And if it may be ſaid in any ſenſe to be *receiv'd* up into glory, that's all *future*, and muſt refer to the vindication that God will give it at laſt, when *the judgment is ſet, and the books are open'd*; when perſons ſhall have their ſecret thoughts diſclos'd, and their final ſentence determin'd by what is written there. This may indeed be called receiving it into glory; but that's all *to come*.

Now, if you apply theſe things to our Saviour, it may be truly ſaid of him, that HE *was manifeſt in the fleſh, juſtified in the Spirit*, &c. There are proper periods for each of theſe. There was a *fulneſs of time* for the firſt, and particular appointments for every one of the reſt. He yet indeed continues to be *preach'd* unto the Gentiles, and *believ'd* on in the world; but there was a *ſet time* to favour theſe deſolate parts of the earth; and of that he ſpeaks with joy, when the *Greeks* came to *Philip*, deſiring to ſee Jeſus. *Now*, ſaith he, *is* Joh. xii. 22, 23. *the hour come that the Son of man ſhall be glorified.*

And then, his being receiv'd up into heaven is an hiſtorical truth; there was a day which he devoted to that ſolemnity. As he was *juſtified of the Spirit* at his reſurrection, being *declar'd to be the Son of God with power by the Spirit of holineſs*, ſo after Acts i. 9, 22. he had ſpoke to the Diſciples, *a cloud receiv'd him out of their ſight*. We read of *this* as the cloſe of a diſpenſation, that *begun with John*'s baptiſm, continued thro' the whole courſe of what *Jeſus did and taught*, and laſted *till the day in which he was taken up from 'em*. All the expreſſions in the text fall eaſie to this interpretation. If we will underſtand 'em of Chriſt, there is no need to force the phraſes out of their natural ſenſe, but take 'em in this book, as we ſhould take 'em in any other. Acts xxvi. 26. *The King knows of theſe things*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *before whom I ſpeak freely*. This is what we muſt

confeſs

confess with our mouths, that Jesus died, and believe in our hearts, that God rais'd him from the dead. Rom. x. 9.

2. He speaks of this as the great mystery of godliness; the most important *wonder* that ever God revealed; a thing that strikes all the powers of adoration. 'Tis *not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world*, whom God has brought to nought; but *his own wisdom in a mystery*, that which is *hidden*, that which he had *ordain'd before the worlds to our glory*; *which not one of the princes of this world knew*; *but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.* 1 Cor. xi. 7, 8, 9, 10. These are βάθη θεοῦ, the depths of divinity.

Now, if you understand this account of the *Gospel*, that cannot be the greatest mystery. I own *it is* a mystery to have such a revelation as this in the world, as the means of raising and feeding a spiritual life; but methinks the resurrection of the body, and the happiness of the soul are greater wonders; that *this mortal should put on immortality*, that people so defil'd should be fitted for heaven, are things that sound more amazing, than to have the Gospel made known among the nations.

The Apostle would not have drawn on our regard after this manner [without controversie great is the mystery of godliness] if there was room to imagine any thing *greater* than what he was going to speak of. 'Tis true, no mystery can be little; but by his manner of introducing *this*, we should suppose there were degrees among 'em, and that now he was about to deliver that which is the *greatest* of all. Now, where lies the extraordinary wonder, that the *Gospel* should be *manifest in the flesh*, *i. e.* as they explain it, that it should be preach'd by men of like passions with ourselves? There are many things that we are more amaz'd at than this. Where's the peculiar degree of mystery, that it should be *justified by the Spirit*, that

SERM. X. the Spirit who reveals it by his wiſdom, ſhould attend it with his influence? And ſo you may ſay of the reſt.

But now, it is all wonder; 'tis as high as our thoughts can riſe; nay, by the confeſſion of thoſe who oppoſe this doctrine, 'tis more than men can believe; it's *too much* a myſtery, that GOD *ſhould be manifeſt in the fleſh*; that he who ſeem'd to be neglected and forſaken of the Father, ſhould be *juſtified of the Spirit*: That he who was made lower than the Angels, was *ſeen* of 'em, and own'd by 'em: That he who was made of the Seed of *Abraham*, *a miniſter of the circumciſion*, ſhould be *preach'd unto the Gentiles*, to whom he was never ſent in perſon: That he who found ſo little faith in the earth, is *believ'd on in the world*; and after he was abandon'd both by God and man, ſhould be *receiv'd up into glory*: Theſe are wonders of another ſort. If there's any comparing of myſteries, we muſt all of us own, that it is a great deal more for God to give us *himſelf* as a companion, than to give us his *book* for a rule.

The Apoſtle does not only ſpeak of a myſtery, but a *great* one, and one that is ſo *without controverſie*; none in the world ſhall be able to deny it the title; and no one ever did; ſo far from it, that the people who don't believe it, give a teſtimony to the greatneſs of the myſtery: There's *no controverſie* about that; no, they are ſo ſatisfied upon this head, as to make it their argument againſt the doctrine, becauſe it is over-myſterious. There are many wonders which they receive, tho' they cannot explain; but this exceeds 'em all.

I ſhall therefore give you the words of the text, as they ſtand in our tranſlation for the firſt branch of the myſtery of godlineſs, or rather the root and ground of all the reſt; and you may take 'em as a doctrine.

GOD

SERM X.

GOD was manifest in the flesh.

I am directed by the parts of the text, and its connexion to what went before, to proceed in the following method.

1. The Person that he speaks of is *God.*

2. Here's the *manifestation* that he has given of himself.

3. This was *in the flesh,* by taking upon him our nature.

4. This is to be consider'd both as *a mystery,* and as a mystery *of godliness,* the foundation of practical religion.

I. We may put the question, as the prophet did, *Who is he that comes from* Edom, *with his died garments from* Bozrah, WHO was thus *manifest in the flesh? He that speaks in righteousness, mighty to save.* We have the plain language of the text, that it was *the great God.* I must own that the title of *God* does not in every place of Scripture signifie the supreme Deity. Isa. lxiii. 1.

First, 'Tis very certain, that there is such a thing as a person's being called God, by virtue of his *office.* And the appellation does not express so much as a moral dignity, or tell us that they who have it are ever the better for it. That sentence in the lxxxii[d] Psalm [*I have said ye are Gods*] seems to be said in reproach. For as they *judg'd unjustly, and accepted the persons of the wicked, as they would not understand, but walk'd on in darkness,* calling them Gods was no security; for they should *die like men, and fall like one of the princes.* As this name cannot *dignifie* a tyrant, it ought not to *protect* him; for it is given to the vilest being in the creation. The Devil himself is call'd *the God of this world:* And *he* may as well from that title plead for an universal empire, as any other person argue an absolute command. 2 Cor. iv. 4.

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Secondly, 'Tis alſo to be confeſs'd, that the name of God is ſometimes given in the execution of a particular warrant: And then it is limited to that very *commiſſion* by which thoſe people are empower'd to act. Thus the Lord tells *Moſes, I*
Exod. vii. 1. *have made thee a God to* Pharaoh, *and* Aaron *thy brother ſhall be thy prophet.*

Thirdly, It ſeems to be given to the Angels for
Heb. i. 6. the dignity of their nature: *Let all the Angels of God worſhip him*, is ſuppoſed to be a quotation of
Pſal. xcvii. 7. thoſe words, *Worſhip him all ye Gods* Now the queſtion is, whether the word in my text is capable of any higher ſenſe than theſe three. For, notwithſtanding what I have ſaid, it is certain,

1. That there is but *one God*; and therefore the communication of the title ought to be regarded with the greateſt modeſty. No perfections of the Divine Nature go along with it. That's the lan-
Deut. vi. 4. guage of all true religion, *The Lord our God is one Lord.* He alone is the poſſeſſor of *immortality*, μόνος ἔχων. *We know that there is no idol in the world*,
1 Tim. vi. 16. οὐδὲν εἴδωλον ἐν κόσμῳ, *and that there is no other*
1 Cor. viii. 4, 5, 6. *God beſides one*, οὐδεὶς θεὸς ἕτερος εἰ μὴ εἷς. For tho' *there are thoſe who are called Gods, either in heaven or in earth, as there are Gods many, and Lords many; yet unto us there is one God the Father, of whom are all things*, ἐξ οὗ as the fountain out of which they are taken, *and we unto him* εἰς αὐτὸν; *and one Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom are all things, and we by him.* The heathen run into a whimſical devotion, by fancying a multitude of deities; but the wiſer ſort among 'em acknowledg'd one ſupreme Power, and whenever any of 'em came out of their erroneous opinion, it is what they loaded with the
1 Theſ. i. 9. utmoſt abhorrence. *They turn'd from idols to ſerve the living and true God.* As it was foretold the
Jer. xvi. 19, 20. *Gentiles ſhould come from the ends of the earth, and ſay, Surely our fathers have inherited vanity, lies, and things*

things wherein there is no profit: Will a man make Gods to himself which are no Gods? Nothing in revelation ever broke in upon the unity of the Godhead. The supposition of two natures, equally supreme, almighty, and eternal, can have no place in reason, and no pretence from Scripture. *'Tis life eternal to know the only true God.* John xvii. SERM. X.

2. Tho' God has suffer'd creatures to wear his *titles*, yet he has always expreſt a jealousie at their sharing his *honour*. Both the angelic and human nature have sunk under his hand, when they made any pretensions this way. *Lucifer the son of the morning said, I will be like the most High; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God:* And thus being *lifted up with pride*, he fell into that which is called *the condemnation of the Devil*; and so it far'd with our first parents: They had a mind to be as *Gods*, and upon that *he drove out the man.* So it has been with particular tyrants. *Nebuchadnezzar*, by raising himself to be a God, was thrown down into a beast, to live and feed as they do, in their manner, and perhaps in their company. The King of *Tyrus* had his *heart lifted up, and said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, and he had set his heart as the heart of God.* And upon this crime you have terrible animadversions of providence: *Wilt thou say yet before him that slays thee, I am a God? but thou shalt be a man, and no God, in the hand of him that slays thee.* Thus the man of sin, the son of perdition, *opposes and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worship'd; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. This wicked one will the Lord consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming.* 3. Isa. xiv. 12. 1 Tim. iii. 6. Gen. iii. 24. Dan. iv. 22. Ezek. xxviii. 2. ver. 9. 2 Thes. ii. 4, 8.

So that you see, tho' God has been pleas'd to allow the title, yet 'tis with such limitations, that it must never signifie in any other than himself, a supre-

SERM. X. ſupremacy of power, or a claim to worſhip. The Angels, tho' they have their name with an eminence that the greateſt of men cannot pretend to, yet are not rais'd by it above the temper and the poſture of devotion: Tho' they *excel in ſtrength*, they obey his commandments, fulfil his pleaſure, and *hearken to the voice of his word.* Nor dare any of them take the homage with the title. One of them would not let *John fall down before him*, but ſays in a peremptory manner, *See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-ſervant, and of thy brethren the prophets: Worſhip thou God.*

Pſal. ciii. 18.

Rev. xxii. 9.

From hence you may conclude, that whoever is called by the name of God, and *upon that* makes a demand of religious worſhip, muſt be either a Creator or an Uſurper. Thus Antichriſt *as God ſits in the temple of God, ſhewing himſelf that he is God.* And would Chriſt do any thing to give a ſuſpicion of *making himſelf equal with God?* Would he, *being a man, make himſelf God*, if he had not the ſame eternal nature? When he roſe again from the dead, it was ſaid *of* him, *Worſhip him all ye Gods;* and *to* him, *thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* This proves that he is greater than thoſe who are called Gods, either from their office, or the dignity of a deriv'd nature.

2 Theſ. ii. 4.

John v. 18. x. 33.

Heb. i. 6, 8.

Tho' worſhip is oftentimes no more than a civility, yet it's impoſſible that the word ſhould carry ſo low a ſenſe in this place. God has order'd his Angels to attend his ſervants, to bear 'em up in their hands, but can that be call'd by the name of *worſhip!* Why ſhould we then ſuppoſe, when God ſaith with all this ſolemnity, [*let the Angels worſhip him*] he means any leſs by it than every reader would think that *David* did in the Pſalm from which it is taken? where he tells us of a *Jehovah* that *reigns; that clouds and darkneſs are about him, righteouſneſs and judgment are the habitation of*

Pſal. xcvii. 2, 3, 4, 5.

of his throne: That the hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth; that the heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory. What! is he speaking all this of a titular God, one that has the name, but not the nature? No surely: On purpose to distinguish the God whom he means from the creatures that are only called so, he turns with indignation upon others, *Confounded be all they that serve graven images*, and then adds, *Worship him all ye Gods.* Would any mortal be at a loss about the explication of these words, as they stand in the old Testament? And are they debas'd and sunk into a lower sense, when they are brought into the new? Don't they contain as much in the Apostle, as they did in the Psalmist? SERM. X. ver. 7.

Nay, you may carry the consideration much farther. In the *Psalm* they are suppos'd to be spoke by *David.* Tho' he receiv'd 'em under the direction of the holy Spirit, yet he delivers 'em in his own name; 'tis a call of the same kind with that *Psal.* ciii. 21. *Bless the Lord, ye his Angels,* and *Psal.* cxlviii. 1, 2. *Praise the Lord in the heavens, praise him in the heights, praise him all his Angels, praise him all his hosts.* Thus he wishes here, *Worship him all ye Gods.* But in the epistle to the Hebrews, the sentence is plac'd with more dignity, as it comes out of the mouth of God himself, *When he brings the first begotten again into the world,* HE *saith, Let all the Angels of God worship him.* HE saith it who has so often said that *he is a jealous God, and will not give his worship to another.* Would not any one conclude that our worship may safely follow that of the Angels? But

I will keep within the argument of the text; the Person who manifested himself in the flesh, is here called GOD. I have allow'd that the mere title does not always signifie what we mean by Divinity.

SERM. X. vinity; but the queſtion is, whether it is *here* capable of ſo low a notion. I deſire you will ſtill keep in mind what I have already told you, that God never gave the title with a deſign of conveying religious *worſhip* to thoſe that have it. And therefore, if we find either the Father has given, or Chriſt himſelf has taken, the name of God, on purpoſe to engage our faith, to poſſeſs our reverence, and lead us into the loweſt adorations, we muſt conclude that he is *God*, who was manifeſt in the fleſh.

You're very ſenſible that this doctrine is avow'd upon ſeveral other Scriptures, and therefore to enter with a full deſign into the controverſie, is to conſider 'em all, which I ſhall not do from this text. My buſineſs is to lay before you what I take to be contain'd in theſe words, and ſhall never bring in any other paſſages than as they give an illuſtration to this. To that purpoſe I would obſerve,

1. That the queſtion is not whether Chriſt was *man*, and had an inferior nature to the Father; that's confeſs'd by all, and therefore,

2. It's to no manner of purpoſe to obſerve how many more texts there are to prove him a *Mediator*, than to prove him a God, becauſe that's properly the main account we are to have of him.

3. His *hiding* the Deity, ſuffering it not to be known, and publickly own'd, is no argument againſt it, becauſe it was part of his obedience to become of *no reputation*, and to make way for the *death of the croſs*.

4. If there are but a *few* places, nay, if there is but *one*, in the Bible where his Divinity is revealed, 'tis the ſame thing, as if there were a thouſand. The ſecond text does not add to the truth of the firſt, it can only confirm it.

5. There are ſeveral paſſages which muſt either be ſo underſtood, or we ſhall find it neceſſary to lay aſide the uſual *meaning* of words, and bring a new ſenſe to 'em. SERM. X.

6. This has been the belief of *good people*, and an opinion that the Spirit of God has witneſs'd to: It has rais'd 'em above their fears, and prov'd their greateſt ſupport in a dying hour.

7. If they were wrong in this, they muſt have been guilty of the worſt of crimes, and have gone out of the world in an act of *idolatry*. And how ſhall we account for the ſatisfaction they had in dying? If that was all a deluſion, will it not be very hard to prove there is any reality in godlineſs?

8. If he is not God, we are in no better a condition, nay upon ſome accounts in much worſe, than thoſe under the law; for *then* God reveal'd himſelf to 'em with a greater majeſty. He govern'd 'em *by himſelf*, which was more than ſpeaking to 'em *by his Son*, upon ſuppoſition that he was an inferior.

9. None but a God could have anſwer'd the end of being *manifeſt* in the fleſh, as a Prophet to teach effectually, as a Prieſt to make reconciliation, and as a King of Saints to be head over all things unto the Church.

10. The character of Deity is what the Scripture has laid upon all the *other* branches of this myſtery; his being juſtified in the Spirit, ſeen of Angels, preach'd unto the Gentiles, believ'd on in the world, and receiv'd up into glory.

1. It is no part of the queſtion, whether Chriſt was man, and might not ſay with all propriety, *My Father is greater than I. That the Son can do nothing of himſelf, but what he ſees the Father do:* Joh. v. 19. *That there is a day and hour which the Son knows not of;* and that *the Son himſelf ſhall be ſubject to* Mar. xiii. 32. *him*

SERM. X. *him that has put all things under him, that God may be all in all:* This matter is univerſally confeſs'd, that he was *the man Chriſt Jeſus*; though he uſes a word to expreſs it that cannot ſignifie ſo much in him as it does in us, when he calls himſelf *the Son of man:* when we are called ſo, the meaning can be no other, than that we are produc'd by two human parents, which is more than can be ſaid of him, and therefore in his genealogy the hiſtorian is very cautious. He tells us, *Jeſus* was about thirty years of age, *being, as was ſuppoſed, the ſon of Joſeph:* But that ſuppoſition was ill grounded, becauſe this was *the ſign that God himſelf* would give his people, the only inſtance that we have of it in all ages of the world, *that a virgin ſhould conceive and bear a ſon.* The manner of bringing this about, is told by the Angel in language that is never to be chang'd: *The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, and the power of the Higheſt ſhall overſhadow thee, and therefore the holy thing that ſhall be born of thee ſhall be called the Son of God.* So that, the very producing of his human nature was a divine act. And yet

1 Cor. xv. 27, 28. 1 Tim. ii. 5. Luke iii. 23. Iſa. vii. 14. Luke i. 35.

There is no controverſie upon this head, that he was truly the man Chriſt Jeſus. 'Tis allow'd, *That foraſmuch as the children were partakers of fleſh and blood, he likewiſe himſelf took part of the ſame. It behov'd him in all things to be made like unto his brethren. We have not an high Prieſt who cannot be touch'd with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without ſin.* So that tho' that *body* was what *God provided for him*, yet he was really *made of a woman.* He had *the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh*; he took upon him thoſe infirmities, and ſubmitted to thoſe vexations in our nature, as if he had been a ſinner. Sin was to be *condemn'd in the fleſh, that the righteouſneſs of the law may be fulfill'd in thoſe that walk after the Spirit.*

Heb. ii. 14, 17. iv. 15. Gal. iv. 4. Rom. viii. 3.

Therefore

Therefore these two principles are the main articles of our religion, that there is *but one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.* He is, what the primitive promise foretold he should be, *the seed of the woman. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among st us. We have seen with our eyes, we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of that word of life.* SERM. X. Gen. iii. 15. John i. 14. 1 John i. 1.

2. It answers no manner of purpose to observe how many *more* texts there are to prove him a man, than there are to tell us he is God. There's a plain reason for this, because our concern with him is in his mediatorial title. *Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. Remember Christ of the seed of David was rais'd from the dead according to my Gospel.* He is the *days-man between God* and us. We read of Christ that *by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, principalities or powers, all things are created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.* But how many of these invisibles he has made, the height of these thrones, the nature of these dominions, the number of these principalities and powers, what worlds he has formed, how he rules 'em (for they are created *for him*, as well as *by him*) the Scripture tells us nothing of, because the design of the Gospel is not to give us the glory that he has from his several creatures, but that which comes from the *redemption* that he has undertaken. It's more our concern to know that he is *head over all things unto the Church*, than that principalities and powers are subject to him; that he redeems *us*, than that he rules *them*. 1 John i. 3. 2 Tim. ii. 8. Job ix. 33. Col. i. 16, 17.

So that, I suppose, you will not be much mov'd by an argument that is often us'd, that Christ is seldom call'd God, but there's scarce a page in the new

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new Teſtament wherein he is not repreſented as leſs than God: no manner of doubt of it; becauſe the deſign of the book is to conſider him as *manifeſt in the fleſh*, as taking away ſin *by the ſacrifice of himſelf*. And therefore if he was call'd a man ten thouſand times, it proves but theſe two things: Firſt, that *he really was ſo*, which none denies; and, ſecondly, that our regard to him muſt be *as he is ſo. This is life eternal, to know Jeſus Chriſt, whom God has ſent.* The Apoſtle ſpeaks of the *excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus his Lord.* This is not a knowledge of what he does among the Angels, how he order'd the ſea and land, giving the former its decree, and the latter its ſettlement, his *ſetting a compaſs upon the face of the heavens*; We are not ſo much intereſted in theſe things as in his *rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and having his delight among the ſons of men.* That I may know him, ſaith he, *the power of his reſurrection, the fellowſhip of his ſufferings, and be made conformable to his death.*

John xvii. 3.

Phil. iii. 8.

Prov. viii. 27.

Ver. 31.

Phil. iii. 10.

3. His *hiding* the Deity, and not letting himſelf be known and confeſs'd abroad, is no argument that he is not God. Becauſe this was the neceſſary humiliation of one nature, and prepar'd for the ſufferings of another. The Divine Nature could not die, and therefore all the humbling of this was to *make himſelf of no reputation*; to lay aſide the form of God in which he was, and take upon him *the form of a ſervant.* The remark that ſome give us upon this text, that the *form* of God does not prove that he was God, but only like him, ſweeps away the reſt of the verſe at once: They may as well ſay *the faſhion of a man*, and *the form of a ſervant* do not ſignify the reality of the nature he took, or the ſufferings that he felt, but only a reſemblance of 'em both. The criticiſm, inſtead of garbling the text, quite deſtroys it, and makes his human

Phil. ii. 7, 8.

human nature a phantom, as well as the divine no more than a resemblance. He charg'd the devils that they should not make him known to *be the holy one of God.* It was needful that he should be *despis'd and rejected of men, a servant of rulers:* this he could not have been, had he suffer'd his brightness to appear. But that is what *none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.* When he had been own'd by the Father in the mount of transfiguration, he order'd his disciples to let none know it, *till the Son of man was risen again*; and gave this as the reason for it, that he was to be deliver'd into the hands of sinful men. When the young man came and kneel'd to him, he refus'd the honours that were his due, *why callest thou me good?* And this was one branch of his humiliation.

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1 Cor. ii. 8.

Mat. xvii. 9.

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Aug. 31. 1718.

IV. IF there are but a *few* places of Scripture where he is called God, nay, if there is but *one* that reveals to us the truth of his divine nature, 'tis the same thing as if there were a thousand. This is what I need not much insist on, because it carries its own evidence. One text may receive light from another, but it has a fulness of truth within itself. 'Tis not here as it ought to be in some affairs among men, that one witness shall not be sufficient; at the Mouth of two or three witnesses must the thing be determined: this is needful when we have to do with creatures that are

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falſe and fallible: that will deceive, and may be deceiv'd; liable to take a deluſion, and ready to give one. But it is otherwiſe when God is the ſpeaker: *He is not a man that he ſhould lie. A God of truth, and without iniquity, juſt and right is he.* His words don't want any thing to give 'em an importance, but are *as ſilver tried in a furnace of earth, purified ſeven times.* So that if he has but ſaid it *once*, there's as great a foundation as our faith can deſire. 'Tis as true that *Shalman ſpoil'd Betharbel in the day of battel*, which is never mention'd, but *Hoſ.* x. 14. as it is that *Jeroboam the ſon of Nebat made Iſrael to ſin*, which is dropt into the ſtory of almoſt every King that ſucceeded him.

Numb. xxiii. 3. Dan. xxxii. 4. Pſal. xii. 6.

I lay down this principle to take off the terror of an objection that has in it a great deal more noiſe than ſubſtance; that there is no compariſon between the number of texts that declare the *human nature* of Chriſt, and thoſe that give him the title and the attributes of a God. This ſignifies nothing at all to the argument: It only ſhews, that we are to believe he was man, *made of a woman*, and that he is chiefly revealed to us in the ſtate of a Mediator, as placing himſelf between God and ſinners, making up the quarrel and filling up the diſtance. As that is our principal concern with him, ſo he is frequently reveal'd in a character that ſuits with the faith we have in him, and the expectation we have from him. *Him has God ſet forth a propitiation, thro' faith in his blood.*

Rom. iii. 25.

His abſolute Deity is what we have the leſs concern with. It's not ſo much to our purpoſe to know what other worlds he has created; in what manner *all things are upheld by the word of his power*; as that *he has by himſelf purg'd away our ſins*, and in our nature is *made better than the Angels.* This is the report of the Goſpel, *the record that God has given us of his Son.* If he has made thrones and dominions,

Heb. i. 3, 4. 1 John v. 10.

dominions, and principalities and powers, (as we are told he has) yet it's not the work of the Bible, to give the records of his government over theſe. For as he is before all things, ſo by him all things conſiſt: ἐν αὐτῷ πάντα συνέστηκε, in him they are held together; he has bound the creation, given a beauty to the parts, and a harmony to the whole. But our buſineſs is to know what he has done, and will do, for the redemption of human nature; ſo that, it's no wonder that the book of God is taken up with the ſtory of his life and tranſactions *in the habitable parts of the earth*, and the courſe of *his delights among the ſons of men. The Word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us; full of grace and truth: And of his fulneſs have we receiv'd, and grace for grace; for the Law was given by Moſes, but grace and truth came by Jeſus Chriſt.* SERM. XI. John i. 14, 16, 17.

Theſe accounts determine nothing of his antecedent ſtate: His dwelling among us, and being made fleſh, is not to be underſtood in any contradiction to his being *with God, and his being God,* and *that the world was made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. The Son of man aſcended up where he was before.* The evidence or importance of a truth does not depend on the number of texts that are brought for it. If there is but a ſingle revelation, if only *one in a certain place* has ſaid it, 'tis enough, becauſe it comes from a God, *that cannot lie*; but we may ſay upon this head, as the Pſalmiſt has done upon another, *God has ſpoken once, yea twice have I heard it.* For Ver. 3, 4. Ch. vi. 62.

5. There are ſeveral Scriptures that cannot be underſtood of any other than God manifeſt in the fleſh, unleſs we will lay aſide the uſual meaning of words, and give 'em a ſenſe in the Bible which they can bear no where elſe. *Except you utter by the tongue words eaſy to be underſtood, how ſhall it be known what is ſpoken? for you ſpeak into the air.* It 1 Cor. xiv. 9.

SERM. XI. is ſcarce to be conceiv'd, that he who has given us this book for a rule of faith and practice, would ſuffer ſo many places in it to carry an uncertain ſenſe, and lay us under any temptation of miſtaking, in a matter that ſo nearly concerns his own glory. I have before told you that I ſhall not enter into the full controverſy, becauſe I would not bring in all the texts that refer to it under this one: and therefore I ſhall only mention a few that declare the perſon of our Redeemer to be the true God.

One is *Iſa.* ix. 6. *To us a child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government ſhall be upon his ſhoulders; and his name ſhall be called Wonderful, Counſellor, the mighty God, the everlaſting Father, the Prince of peace.* Where we read of his incarnation, in the firſt and loweſt part of life; to us a child is born, to us a Son is given: that can be underſtood of no other than him, who was *made of a woman, and made under the law.* The government ſhall be upon his ſhoulders: we ſhould think that this is too much for a creature; but leſt it ſhould be taken for no more than a delegation of authority committed to him, we are told at large who he is: This is the name whereby he ſhall be called, Wonderful, Counſellor, *the mighty God, the everlaſting Father,* the Prince of peace. *Of the increaſe of his government and peace there ſhall be no end; he ſhall ſit upon the throne of David.* Here are things thrown together that plainly relate to different natures. He is ſaid to ſit upon the throne of *David*, which ſignifies a ſpiritual empire over his people in this world; and yet, that of his government there ſhall be no end; whereas we know, that the places where he has it ſhall be deſtroy'd. So that, the immortality of his kingdom, and the peace that ariſes from it muſt be underſtood of ſomething to which the throne of *David* never reach'd. Again, it is ſaid that he is

born a *Son*, and yet that his name shall be call'd the everlasting *Father*; that he is given to us as a *child*, and yet that he is the mighty *God*. SERM. XI.

One would think that the *manner* of speaking this should be no part of the objection, that he is not said to *be* so, but only that it's the name whereby he shall be *call'd*. For tho' the title of *God* is given to persons who fill the office, yet this is too much to be said, that such a one is *the mighty God*; and it transcends all imagination, that any creature should be call'd *the everlasting Father*. What a great deal of learning must be forc'd into the service to disrobe these words of the majesty they appear with? We'll suppose, that they signify no more than a God by office; that they are only Names of divinity, and don't express the true Nature: But would the generality of people take 'em so? We may say upon this argument *what is written in the law, how readest thou?*

Is it not pity that so many thousands of humble, serious persons should be under a necessity of thinking wrong upon the subject, only for want of that critical learning, that reaches such a very little way? Must a man either be a *Critick* or an *Idolater*? Can we think that God, who was so gracious to give us this book, has made it like a broken trumpet, to give an uncertain sound? Is this the way for those that *err in spirit to come to understanding, and those that murmur'd to learn doctrine*? Isa. xxix. 24. Can we say, upon this supposition, that he causes *light to shine out of darkness*, and gives us in our hearts *the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*? 2 Cor. iv. 6. That he should tell us of a *child*, and call him the everlasting *Father*, which is the highest name that he takes to himself! That he should charge us to call a person, like ourselves, by the title of the *mighty God*, which is the greatest word that we can use, and belongs to none but an infi-

SERM. XI. nite nature! I ſay, why ſhould he thus enſnare our ſouls with metaphors! There's not one reader in a thouſand but would think that the perſon here ſpoke of was *God*.

Suppoſe the former part of the verſe was left out, or the whole vary'd thus, This is *my name* whereby I will be call'd; the mighty God, the everlaſting Father, and the Prince of peace; would not all mankind believe the words were uncapable of any lower ſenſe than what agrees to the ſupreme Being? And do they ſignifie any leſs by the addition of that clauſe; *To us a Child, a Son is given?* 'Tis hard indeed upon thoſe who do not read the text with a drain, a criticiſm that ſucks out the main force of it.

What men of deep thought and vaſt abilities may do I know not; they have got the art of making divine titles ſignifie only a *creature*, and divine worſhip only a *civility*: but other people will be at a loſs, who would gladly always ſpeak of God, as they ſpeak of no one beſides; who uſe words both *of* him, and *to* him, which they dare not give to any other Being. It will be difficult for ſuch as thoſe to know how to talk, becauſe their beſt phraſes are gone: they will want language for devotion, if he muſt be called the mighty God, who is *not* the mighty God, and he the everlaſting Father, who is *not* the everlaſting Father. There's no getting higher than theſe terms: And can we imagine that God would uſe *great ſwelling words of vanity*, or ſay that of a child which is downright falſe of every one but himſelf? if it was not true that our Saviour ſaith, *I and* Joh. x. 30. *my Father are one*.

Another text that I think cannot be diverted from this interpretation is, *Mic.* v. 2. *Thou Bethlehem Ephratah, tho' thou be little among the thouſands of Judah, yet out of thee ſhall he come forth unto me, that*

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that is to be the ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been of old from everlasting. Here we are under every necessity to suppose, that he speaks of a *Messiah*, from the place of his birth. Thou *Bethlehem Ephratah*, tho' thou be little among the thousands of *Judah*, yet out of thee shall HE come. This was a circumstance that both Jews and Christians were agreed in, that Christ should come out of *Bethlehem*, the town where *David* dwelt; and that expression, he shall come forth *unto me*, shews his errand that he was to be the Mediator between God and man: He should *glorifie the Father on earth: His meat and drink was to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work.* Who is it then, that should have his nativity at *Bethlehem*, and such a concern with the great God? One whose goings forth have been of old, *from everlasting.* Joh. iv. 34.

We'll suppose for a while that those *goings forth of old* were no more than the manifestations that he made of himself to the Patriarchs and Prophets: It was *the Angel* who went before 'em in their marches from *Egypt*, and frequently appear'd to 'em in the promis'd land. This sense of the text does shew that he went forth *of old*; but what shall we do with the other word, *from everlasting?* To say that this sometimes signifies no more than a long while *to come*, when it is mention'd in *prophecy*, cannot be denied; but that therefore it signifies only a long while *past*, when it is deliver'd in *history*, is by no means to be allow'd. Several things that shall perish, are said to be *for ever*, because they will hold for many ages; but I do not know that any thing is *from eternity*, or has that title given to it, besides the nature and counsels of God. *In his times he will shew who is the blessed and only Potentate, who only has immortality.* 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16.

To everlasting, may be applied to Saints and Angels, and the happiness of both; but 'tis only said

SERM. XI. of One, FROM *everlaſting to everlaſting thou art God.*
Pſal. xc. 2. We may limit the paſſages that give the character of eternity for the time to come, but it was never once beſtow'd upon any thing as to what is *paſt*; and therefore, if his goings forth of old, which have been *from everlaſting*, mean no more than that he has done thus for ſeveral ages, it is uſing the word as it never was us'd before, and ſo as no human thought can reconcile to ſenſe. It is falſe, it is monſtrous, and a groſs abſurdity to ſay, that any created perſon was from everlaſting, or that he was *before all things*. Had it been only that he was *from the beginning, or ever the earth was*, or that he had a *glory with the Father before the world was*, ſome diminutive ſenſe might be forc'd in upon the words, that they only tell us he had a being antecedent to this creation; and could not an Angel have ſaid ſo too? If the phraſes mean no more than an exiſtence before our world, they make him *no better than the Angels. Thoſe ſtars of the morning* Job xxxviii. 7. *ſung together, and all the ſons of God ſhouted for joy*, when this earth of ours was made: So that, if that's all that Chriſt means, *Prov.* viii. he ſpeaks beneath himſelf.

The Angels had a *glory with the Father before the world was*; but the words under our preſent thoughts are not patient of ſuch an interpretation as is fix'd with ſo much violence upon others; for here it is ſaid, that he is *from everlaſting*. Angels have had their *goings forth of old:* they flew about this world of ours after it was put into ſhapes; but can it be ſaid of 'em without horrid blaſphemy, that they are *from everlaſting?* And therefore that which is here affirm'd of the Prince that ſhould riſe out of *Bethlehem*, *the man that is to be our peace*, is too much for a creature: 'tis a contradiction to all receiv'd being, eternally inconſiſtent with any beginning. It can never be

ſaid

said of Him, that there was a time when he was not: We may apply to him in these words, *From everlasting to everlasting thou art God.* But I shall open no more Scriptures now in the pursuit of this argument; I see it will be better to distribute 'em under the several branches of the text that are yet to be consider'd. SERM. XI.

6. That God was manifest in the flesh, has been the faith of good people in all ages: *As they believ'd in God, they believ'd in Christ.* This indeed, of itself, is no conclusive argument, because our faith does not stand *in the wisdom* or holiness *of man, but in the power of God*; nevertheless, it is not to be despis'd. This was the great persuasive *to lay aside every weight, and the sin that easily besets us,* because we are *encompass'd about with so great a cloud of witnesses.* We are *followers of them who thro' faith and patience do inherit the promises,* when we abide in the doctrine of Christ. Joh. xiv. 1. 1 Cor. ii. 5. Heb. xii. 1, 2. vi. 12.

That this has been the opinion of those who have serv'd their generation according to the will of God, will scarce be denied. The quotations we have out of the ancient writers that seem to look another way, are to me of very little value, for this one reason: that as far as we can judge of the primitive church by the new Testament, the great controversie was not so much about Christ's divinity, as his humanity. *Many deceivers are enter'd into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh: this is a deceiver and an Antichrist.* 'Twas then, as he calls it, *the spirit of Antichrist,* and *the spirit of error.* The opinion, I suppose, was not, that he never appear'd to the world, but that he did not take upon him our real nature; it was not *in the flesh.* This was the delusion of those times, which the holy Writer confutes in so particular a manner: *That which was from the beginning, which we have seen, heard, look'd upon,* 2 Joh. 7.

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on, and which our hands have handled, declare we unto you. This ſhews that Chriſt had more than a reſemblance of our nature. That was the error againſt which he delivers all his caution. *Beloved,* 1 Joh. iv. 1, 2, 3. *believe not every ſpirit, but try the ſpirits, whether they are of God; becauſe many falſe Prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every ſpirit that confeſſes that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh is of God; and every ſpirit that confeſſes not that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh is not of God: And this is that ſpirit of Antichriſt whereof you have heard that it ſhould come, and even now already is it in the world.* 'Tis more difficult to conceive that an Angel ſhould be made a man, than that he who is the great Mediator ſhould be a God. I think human reaſon would find more arguments againſt the truth of his death, than againſt the divinity of his Perſon: And indeed we could not have believ'd either of theſe without a revelation; for *Chriſt crucify'd is to the Jews a ſtumbling-block,* 1 Cor. i. 23. *and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs.*

Now I will ſuppoſe, that this opinion continu'd ſome time after; therefore it's no wonder that we find paſſages in the writings of the Fathers, that tell us plainly that he was man: and on purpoſe to give this aſſertion the greater force and weight, they may have contriv'd a method of ſpeaking, that has render'd 'em a little obſcure to poſterity. You may take theſe three things along with you.

Firſt, That it was certainly right in them to lay down the truth of our Saviour's human nature: this is a fundamental article; not only to our faith as it regards the doctrines of chriſtianity, but to our hope and comfort: without this, he is not *the ſeed of the woman,* he has made no ſatisfaction, nor can he preſent us *in the body of his fleſh thro' death.*

Secondly,

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Secondly, The vehemence of their asserting this might be owing to the opposition that was made by unbelievers: this, as I have already shewn, seems to be the prevailing opinion; and therefore perhaps some learned and good men might exceed in the way they took to deliver themselves. But,

Thirdly, It's very plain that many have spoil'd the doctrine *thro' philosophy and vain deceit:* I fear there were temptations to bring some men into the church whom the grace of God never brought thither, because of their human learning. Then perhaps were too much admir'd; they came to Christ Jesus, not as learners, but as teachers, and thus threw in their own froth into the sincere milk of the word, which curdled it upon the minds of men. The Apostle came not with any ὑπεροχὴ λόγου ἢ σοφίας supereminence of phrase or wisdom, *declaring the testimony of God: He determin'd to know nothing among 'em but Jesus Christ, and him crucified* His speech and preaching was not in these persuading terms of human wisdom, πειθοῖς ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας λόγοις, *but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power.*

Col. ii. 8.

1 Cor. ii. 1, 2, 4.

Those phrases, Light of Light, God of God, very God of very God, have too much of the philosopher in 'em, and too little of the christian. 'Tis not worth the while to contend about 'em, for they will be unintelligible when we have done all we can. To me it is of more value, what a company of serious persons think in their devotions, who are fill'd with a reverence for God, and a jealousie of sin, than what's agreed upon by a sett of preachers, who oftentimes meet only *to bite and devour one another.*

That which I lay the greatest weight upon is, not so much that the Deity of Christ has been maintain'd and prov'd by persons of vast abilities, men skill'd in languages, history, and the methods

of

SERM. XI. of argument; but that it is a doctrine ſupported by *the witneſs of the Spirit* in the hearts of believers, as that which is *according to godlineſs*. Feeling, I confeſs, is an individual argument: It's what a man cannot communicate to another; but ſtill, all the world will allow me to regard thoſe principles that have had the beſt influence upon them that profeſs'd em. I have ſeen people couragious in an evil day, devout and reverent in all the acts of worſhip, and chearful to meet their death; and they have given this *as a reaſon* of the joy and *hope that was in 'em*. I muſt think well of the principles, unleſs I think very ill of the perſons.

2 Tim. i. 12. This was the Apoſtle's great cordial: *Tho' I ſuffer theſe things, I ſhall not be aſham'd, for I know in whom I have believ'd, and am perſuaded that he is able to keep what I have committed to him againſt that day.* You ſee his confidence is in the power, the *ability* of him on whom he depended; and that which repreſented him in this character was his infinite perfections. We ſtand *in the Lord, and in the power of his might: We look for the mercy of the Lord Jeſus unto eternal life:* His mercy brings us into that life; and then he adds, *Now to him that is able to keep us from falling, and to preſent us faultleſs before his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wiſe God our Saviour be dominion and praiſe for ever.* We are preſerv'd by the mercy of the Lord Jeſus. He is here ſaid to *preſent us before his glory*, as elſewhere, we read that he will *preſent us to himſelf*, and that he does it as *the only wiſe God our Saviour.*

Eph. vi. 10. Jude 21, 23, 24, 25.

This has made good people eaſie both in life and death: They have look'd on him as *the reſurrection and the life.* What they have believ'd of his divinity has gone deeper into their holineſs and comfort than any other principle could do. This has been their ſupporting conſideration, the very thing

that

that gave 'em all their courage. Thus the Spirit did his office by *taking the things of Christ, and shewing* them unto men: He shews us his life and his death, that the one was holy, and the other dreadful; but the glory that he gives to Christ is upon other heads, as our Lord himself expounds it: *All that the Father has are mine, and therefore I said, he shall take of mine, and shew it unto you.* It was with reference to his union with the Father, his share in the glory, the dominion, in all that the Father has, that the Spirit does thus *reveal* him. SERM. XI. Joh. xvi. 14, 15.

7. If these good people were wrong in their opinion, it will obscure all the experimental part of religion, the joys and pleasures with which they gave themselves to God; first in worship, and at last in death. What must we say for *the power of godliness* after this? because, when they rested on a Saviour in the last acts of faith, when they look'd unto Jesus in the closing moments of life, as *the author and finisher of faith*, and in that regarded him as God, they must go out of the world in a gross idolatry.

Don't let any one tell me, I may give worship to him, tho' he is a creature, only my *greatest* devotion is paid *thro' him* to the divine nature. I know nothing that more expresses my dependence, or can be call'd worship in a truer sense, than the last offices of my faith on a death-bed. If bowing my head, and giving up the ghost is not devotion, I know not what is; and I should be very unwilling in that hour to rely upon one who is less than God. As Mediator, he is not the proper object of our faith and hope, but only introduces and leads 'em in. BY HIM *we believe in God, who rais'd him from the dead, and gave him glory, that our faith and hope may be* IN GOD; and certainly we would have our faith and hope in God when we die. No serious person would 1 Pet. i. 21.

say

SERM. XI. ſay leſs than *David* did, *Into thy hands do I commit my ſpirit, for thou haſt redeem'd it, O Lord God of truth.* Here his faith and hope were in God, as they ought to be.

Pſal. xxxi. 5.

But what ſhall we think of the martyr *Stephen*, when he cries out with a loud voice, *Lord Jeſus receive my ſpirit:* Did *his* words contain any thing leſs than *David*'s? Was not his dependence upon the ſame power? Did he not regard this Jeſus as able to ſave him? And would he have ventur'd his ſpirit into any other hands than thoſe of a God? Dare we ſay, that he did not die with a faith as well plac'd as *David*'s? I'm ſure, if he to whom he committed his ſpirit is not God, he was guilty of perverting his allegiance in the greateſt ſolemnity of all: 'twas too much to ſay to a creature. *David* had two things in view at that time. *Firſt*, his own comfort, Into thy hands do I commit my ſpirit, for *thou haſt redeem'd it:* And, *Secondly*, God's glory. This was the laſt thing that he could do towards it, and therefore he gave him his titles, *O Lord God of truth.* Had he apply'd to any one beſides, he had loſt both theſe ends; he had been guilty of deſtroying his own peace, and of alienating from God the honour that he was bound to give him; but he had *none*, even *in heaven but God*, no creature above the Angels whom he could deſire beſides him. And did *Stephen* come any lower, when he ſaid, *Lord Jeſus receive my ſpirit?* He did the greateſt, as well as the laſt thing that could be done, in a way of devotion and confidence: And had he any other in heaven beſides *David*'s God? If ſo, the redemption of mankind, inſtead of drawing us *to* God, draws us *from* him. He that had no partner in his honour *before*, muſt have one *now*; and ſouls under the new Teſtament can die into the arms of a perſon who is not God, tho' they under the old could not think of doing

Acts vii. 59.

Pſal. lxxiii. 25.

ſo without horror. But doubtleſs when *Stephen* ſaid this, he did not only conceive of Jeſus as a *Jew* after the fleſh, but as God over all bleſſed for evermore. SERM. XI.

I have been told of a Gentleman with whom I had the honour of ſome acquaintance, that as he liv'd many years with a public character, both in the Army and Parliament, that he confeſs'd to an intimate friend, from whom I have the ſtory, that he had for a long time many doubts about the Divinity of Chriſt; but, ſaith he, "Now death is "coming on, I find none but a God will do; "and if he is not *that*, I cannot venture my ſoul "into *his hands*." If this is a falſhood, 'tis pity it ever ſhould be a dying principle. 'Tis an Almighty act, you know, that makes us Chriſtians. *We are born of God*; and *he who has begun this good work, will perform it to the day of Chriſt*: And ſurely this can be no other than God; and therefore when we look to *Jeſus* as the author and finiſher of faith, it is to him as *beginning* the good work, and to him as *performing* it. John i. 3. Phil. i. 6.

8. If he is not God who was manifeſt in the fleſh, our cauſe is no better than that of the *Jews*; nay, in ſome reſpects, a great deal worſe. They had a noble diſpenſation: God reveal'd *himſelf* to 'em by ſigns, and wonders, and voices, by a mighty hand, and an out-ſtretched arm: He is ſaid to be *in the midſt of 'em*: They heard *his* voice: The cloud that cover'd the tabernacle was ſuch a preſence of the Deity as exceeded all that we know, if it was only a creature who came down among us. Now it is mention'd as the glory of theſe laſt days, that *God has ſpoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed to be the heir of all things.* There's no more in this than ſpeaking by *Moſes*, if he was not counted *worthy of more glory than Moſes*; and *that* he is not as a meſſenger but as an author, *inaſmuch as he that builded the houſe has more honour than the houſe.* Heb. i. 1, 2.

Chriſt

SERM. XI. Chriſt put himſelf into a meaner way than *Moſes* did: All the prophets that ever went before him made a greater figure; but the diſtinction lay
John i. 14. in this: *They ſaw his glory as the glory of the only begotten of the Father.* God had ſpoken to the world, ſometimes by prophets, and ſometimes by prieſts, who were the ſtanding miniſters of his houſe; and ſuppoſe now at laſt he had ſent down an Angel to be the preacher among us, this had been really a greater diſpenſation than what we are under: For, tho' it is confeſs'd that Chriſt had a nature above the Angels, yet, as he appear'd ſo much *lower than they*, that paſſes for nothing.

But the main glory of the diſpenſation conſiſts
Mat. i. 23. in this, *that his name is call'd Immanuel, which is God with us.* In a lower ſenſe, that might have been ſaid with truth of every hero, every prophet, their captains in the field, and their prieſts in the temple, that God was with 'em; but it never was made the name of a perſon. If the moſt glorious Angel in heaven was to be ſent down as the general of our forces, or a teacher in our aſſemblies, and a bleſſing attended him, it might be ſaid we had the divine preſence, but we muſt never have call'd him *Immanuel.* So that it ſignifies *that* in our Saviour, which it could not have done in any creature. It's the character of his *perſon.* You muſt not apply it to the ſpiritual preſence of God with his people, for there has been more of *that* ſince Chriſt's time than there was before. He was with us in a greater glory at the day of Pentecoſt, and in a more populous converſion. But when this is ſaid of a child that ſhould be born, it is abſtracted from all ſucceſſes; in having HIM, we have *God with us. He that had ſeen him, had ſeen the Father*; ſo that there was no need to ſay, *ſhew us the Father: He was in*
John xiv. 9, 10. *the Father, and the Father in him.* GOD himſelf was manifeſt in the fleſh. This exceeds all that ever

ever the *Jews* had; and therefore their privileges are mention'd in a rising way, *to them pertain'd the adoption, the covenants, the giving of the law, the glory, the promises.* In some of these they go beyond us: We have nothing equal to the giving of the law that was *ordain'd by Angels*, and the *Glory* that cover'd their tabernacle and fill'd their temple. *Theirs were the Fathers*; but the last, in which our interest is comprehended is greater than all the rest, that *of them, as concerning the flesh, Christ came.* How comes that to be the crowning privilege, but as he is *over all, God blessed for ever?* SERM. XII. Rom. ix. 4, 5.

9. If he was not God, his manifestation in the flesh would not have answer'd the great ends for which it is appointed. He came as an *high priest* to make atonement, as a *King* of saints to be *head over all things to his Church*; and this he could not be without the *fulness of him who fills all in all.* Eph. i. 22, 23.

10. The character of Deity may be allow'd here, because the Spirit has carried it thro' all the other branches of the mystery. As a God, he is *justified in the Spirit*, declared to be the *Son of God* with power, by the Spirit of holiness in the Resurrection from the dead. As a God he is *seen of Angels*; for when the Father brings the first begotten into the world, he saith, let all the Angels worship HIM. As a God he is *preach'd unto the Gentiles*; *look unto me, and be you sav'd all the ends of the earth; for I am the* LORD, *and there is none else.* As a God he is *believ'd on in the world*, for our faith and hope must be *in God.* And as a God he is *receiv'd up into glory*; for to the Son it is said, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* Rom. i. 4. Heb. i. 6. Isa. xlv. 22. 1 Pet. i. 23. Heb. i. 8.

Sept. 14. 1718.

SERMON XII.

II. THE great myſtery of godlineſs tells us that this God was MANIFESTED. The revelation he has made of himſelf is the ground of all our religion. Without it there could be no worſhip and no hope: Our drawing nigh to him, and all our expectations from him are only the rebound of theſe diſcoveries in which he has appear'd to us. The Pſalmiſt has plac'd theſe things in their true order, *When thou ſaidſt, ſeek ye my face, my heart ſaid unto thee, thy face, Lord, will I ſeek.* Pſal. xxvii. 8.

The good of any diſpenſation ariſes from the degrees it gives us of this divine knowledge. Whatever ſets out the author of our being in a truer and greater light muſt be the more deſirable: And therefore on this account the Goſpel that is preach'd in *theſe laſt days* exceeds all the older methods of devotion, becauſe there we have a better manifeſtation of God. As we can have nothing higher than eternal life, ſo *this is life eternal to know the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he has ſent.* John xvii. 2, 3.

Under this head I ſhall enquire in what characters God is to be known of men, by which it will appear, that the new Teſtament ought to have the preference that the holy Spirit has given it to all the other revelations that were ever made; becauſe the main ſubject of our miniſtry is *Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*, and the ſucceſs of it is *the light of the knowledge* 2 Cor. iv. 5, 6.

ledge of the glory of God in the perſon or *face* πρόσωπῳ of Jeſus Chriſt. SERM. XII.

The Queſtion then before us is, what we are to know of God in order to the practice of duty, and the aſſurance of hope; under what notions are we to receive him into our minds? I anſwer, 1. As the God that made us and all the world. 2. As the object of an univerſal worſhip. 3. As our lawgiver. 4. As our judge. 5. As an offended ſovereign. 6. As the author of reconciliation. 7. As the contriver of a ſufficient righteouſneſs. 8. As the fountain of that Grace by which we are reſtor'd to his image. 9. As the great example of holineſs and purity. 10. As the giver of thoſe joys that are laid up in another world.

Under theſe characters has the great God reveal'd himſelf to us. Thus he is to be known, and upon theſe grounds to be admir'd with reverence and a godly fear. He has in various ways and different meaſures given out theſe glories of his name; but the beſt appearance in which we have 'em all, is the ſending of his Son *in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh*, and the publication of his Word to mankind: Thus he has *aboliſh'd death, and brought life and immortality to light by the Goſpel.* We have the *light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God.* Several of theſe manifeſtations are what the heathen liv'd under; but in regarding them I ſhall have three things in my view: Firſt, the impreſſing of this truth upon you, that *thus* we are to conceive of the great God in all our applications to him: And, ſecondly, that even in thoſe common ideas that we have of him, the Goſpel has given us a *peculiar* evidence. And, thirdly, that all theſe titles belong to our bleſſed Saviour, which I hope you will find as we advance thro' the ſeveral particulars.

2 Tim. i. 10. 2 Cor. iv. 4.

1. One manifeſtation that God has made of himſelf is in a character that gives us our moſt early

SERM. XII. concern with him, that he is *the Former of all things.*
Pſal. c. 3, 4. *We come before him with a ſong, and enter into his preſence with thankſgiving*, becauſe *he is the Lord our God, we are the work of his hand, and the ſheep of his paſture; he has made us, and not we ourſelves.* This account of himſelf he has ſcatter'd all over the univerſe. 'Tis ſaid of thoſe who have no revealed religion,
Rom. i. 19, 20. that *what may be known of God is manifeſt in 'em, and ſhewn to us:* Nay, *the inviſible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that do appear, even his eternal power and Godhead.* The volumes that he has publiſh'd of his
Pſal. xix. 1, 2, 3. own perfections are large and copious. *The heavens declare the glory of the Lord, and the firmament ſhews his handy work; day unto day utters ſpeech, and night unto night declares knowledge; and there is no voice or language where their ſpeech is not heard.*

But yet even this common argument is plac'd in a better light by the coming of Jeſus Chriſt: He lets us underſtand the creation to more advantage. He has adjuſted, improv'd, and enlighten'd the principles of nature: So that *by faith we underſtand*
Heb. xi. 3. *that the worlds were made by the word of God, for the things that are were not made of things that do appear.* You muſt not think that natural religion gives us one God and chriſtianity another. The Apoſtle
Acts xvii. 23. tells the *Athenians, Him, whom ye ignorantly worſhip, declare I unto you.* They might, by his inſtructions know the Deity in a better way than they ever would have done by obſervation and philoſophy. He ſpeaks of him under principles which
Ver. 24. they confeſs'd; *God that made the world, and all things therein, ſeeing he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwells not in temples made with hands.* He argues, you ſee, from our primitive notions of the Divine Nature to ſhew the folly of all ſuperſtition: *Nei-*
——25. *ther is he worſhipped with mens hands, as tho' he needed any thing.* This indeed is what thoſe confus'd idolaters

laters could not imagine; but he draws it from a principle which every one own'd, *seeing that he gives to all life and breath, and all things.* With this reason he batters down their impure devotions; *We ought not to think the Godhead is like unto silver or gold, or stone graven by art or man's device.* This corruption they were run into; and tho' it is unworthy of those sentiments which themselves allow'd, yet it was the Gospel alone that set 'em at liberty, from the contradiction they offer'd to their own principles. *The times of this ignorance God wink'd at, but now he commands all men every where to repent.* SERM. XII. Ver. 29. 30.

The world never knew him aright as a *Creator*, till he revealed himself as a *Redeemer*. In the scheme of salvation we see how the universe came by its form, and its being. When God was manifest in the flesh we beheld our nature. 'Tis said of him that came among us, that *all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made; in him was life: He was in the world, and the world was made by him, tho' the world knew him not.* In this revelation we contemplate *the Lord our Maker.* This truth lies open in the scheme of redemption to be seen and read of all men. *God has in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he has appointed to be the heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.* This is part of the discovery that we have by the Gospel, *to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery that has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.* When he saith, that *his rejoicing was in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights among the sons of men,* he takes care to tell us, that *at the preparing of the heavens He was then, that He set a compass upon the face of the deep, He established the clouds above, He gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment, He appointed the foundations of the earth.* John i. 3, 4, 10. Heb. i. 1, 2. Eph. iii. 9. Prov. viii. 27, 28, 29, 31.

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The child that is born to us is no other than *the mighty God.* This *Lord in the beginning laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of His hands: They ſhall periſh, but He remains; as a veſture, He will fold 'em up, and they ſhall be chang'd, but He is the ſame, and His years ſhall not fail.* The honours they pay him in heaven are upon this head. The Apoſtle *John* had much the ſame viſion with the Prophet *Iſaiah:* The Angels about his throne are crying out, *holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty;* and what they add to it (*who is, and was, and is to come*) determines the application of the titles, that *theſe things ſaid Eſaias, when he ſaw his glory, and ſpake of* HIM. They caſt their crowns before his throne ſaying, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour, and power, for thou haſt created all things, and for thy pleaſure they are, and were created.* This is ſaid of Him, who *upholds all things by the word of his power,* and who, *having by himſelf purg'd our ſins, for ever ſat down at the right hand of the Majeſty on high.* The characters are conjoin'd, *He is the head of the body the Church, the beginning, he is before all things, and by him all things conſiſt.* He that has *aſcended into heaven, and deſcended, has gather'd the winds in his fiſts, and bound the waters in a garment, and eſtabliſh'd all the ends of the earth.* In the laſt act of reſignation we *commit the keeping of our Souls to Him, as a faithful Creator.* It may be ſaid of Him in the whole revelation of the Goſpel, *Is not he thy Father who has bought thee, has not he made thee and eſtabliſh'd thee?*

Iſa. ix. 6. Heb. i. 10, 11, 12. Iſa. vi. 3. Rev. iv. 8. John xii. 41. Rev. iv. 11. Heb. i. 3. Col. i. 17, 18. Prov. xxx. 4. 1 Pet. iv. 19. Deut. xxxii. 6.

2. He is manifeſted as the object of univerſal worſhip: This flows from the former as a practical inference: *Let us worſhip and bow down before the Lord our Maker. He has made of one blood all nations of men that dwell on the face of the earth, and determin'd the times before appointed, and fix'd the bounds of their habitation that they might ſeek him, if haply*

Pſal. xcv. 6. Acts xvii. 26, 27.

haply they might feel after him, and find him, for he is not far from any one of 'em. SERM. XII.

This argument is more press'd in the Gospel than in any other dispensation; as the Apostles told those at *Lystra*, *We are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities to the living God, who has made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: who in times past suffer'd all nations to walk in their own ways; but now*, in this revelation, he shews 'em what a violence they offer'd to their own principles: tho' the Gospel does not give 'em their notions of God, yet it works and rules 'em. Their opinion that he is the author of all things, passes for nothing; it does 'em no good till a true religion sets it home; for, *none of 'em saith, Where is God my maker, who gives songs in the night?* Thus we come to be directed in our worship: and therefore the *Ephesians*, who were superstitious enough, being keepers of the image that fell from *Jupiter*, are said to be not only *without Christ, aliens to the common-wealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise*, but *without God in the world*. Tho' they pretended to worship him, their notions were either false or feeble; their belief in God as the supreme cause, and the last end, was totally disabled. These truths lay in their minds as in a hospital, unactive and impotent. They could not worship him even as a Creator. It is said of the *Thessalonians*, that upon the preaching of the Gospel, *They turn'd to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.* Tho' these notions seem to be scatter'd over the world, yet there was a time when the *Galatians knew not God*, but *did service to those who by nature were no Gods*; but he is now manifested as *the hearer of prayer, that unto him all flesh may come.*

Acts xiv. 15, 16. Job xxxvi. 10. Eph. ii. 12. 1 Thes. i. 9, 10. Gal. iv. 8. Psal. lxv. 2.

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He that came in the fleſh has made known himſelf as the object of adoration. We have a prophecy of the happineſs that is to flow over all the earth: *The ends of the world ſhall remember and turn unto the Lord, the kindreds of the nations ſhall worſhip before him, for the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor among the nations. All that be fat upon earth ſhall eat and worſhip, and they that go down to the duſt ſhall bow before him.* The lxxii[d] is call'd a Pſalm for *Solomon*, but you will by the characters be convinc'd, that a greater than *Solomon* is mention'd there: *All kings ſhall fall down before him, all nations ſhall ſerve him, his name ſhall endure for ever, his name ſhall continue as long as the ſun; men ſhall be bleſs'd in him, and all nations ſhall call him bleſſed.*

Pſal. xxii. 27, 28, 29.

lxxii. 11, 17.

3. Another manifeſtation that we have of God, and in which the Goſpel exceeds all that went before, is that he is a *Lawgiver*; from him we receive the rules of our Duty: *He has ſhewn what is good, and what he requires of us.* Some degree of this light was given to the heathen: *They having not the law, were a law unto themſelves: they had the work of the law written in their hearts, their conſcience alſo bearing 'em witneſs, and their thoughts in the mean while accuſing or excuſing one another.* 'Twas an aggravation of their ſin, that *when they knew God they glorified him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations.*

Mic. vi. 8.

Rom. ii. 14, 15.

i. 21.

But what are all theſe diſcoveries, if compar'd to *the grace of God, that brings ſalvation, teaching to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent evil world?* The *Jews* had ſuch a manifeſtation for ſeveral ages, as had not been given to any other nation: *He ſent his word unto Jacob, his ſtatutes and judgments unto Iſrael.* But in theſe laſt days, ſince he has ſpoken to us by his Son, the way of God is taught more

Tit. ii. 11, 12.

Pſ. cxlvii. 16, 19.

perfectly. The law is not *made void thro' faith*; but as he came in Person to *fulfil it*, so his Gospel is given to *establish it*. 'Tis only a God who can give a command. This character is united to those that contain the greatest glory: *The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, and he will save us.* And therefore,

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Rom. iii. 31. Mat. v. 17. Rom. iii. ult. Isa. xxxiii. 22.

If you find that He who was manifest in the flesh, took upon him this title, (as the *Jews* said, he *made himself equal with God*) this, without a Divine Nature, would have been arrogance in him, as much as any other man. We must confound the characters of Christ and Antichrist, if they are both creatures. It stands as the glaring impiety of the latter, that he *exalts himself above all that is called God, or is worshipp'd; that he sits in the temple of God, giving out himself that he is God.* He makes laws for conscience, and does that which is peculiar to the Deity: and if the great Redeemer did so too, nothing could take off the charge of blasphemy, but a supposition that he was truly God: and thus did the Apostles declare him. *Peter* tells *Cornelius* of their *preaching peace by Jesus Christ who is Lord of all.* *Paul* was *not without law to God*, but ἔννομος Χριστῷ *under the law to Christ.* Thus he made his approach to him at first, *Lord, what wilt* THOU *have me to do?* This is language that ought not to be us'd to a creature; and you may observe that he said it, after he had enquir'd who this Lord was, and receiv'd his answer, *I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest.* He resigns himself to this *Person* with the same unreserve as *David* did, *Lord, I am thy servant, I am thy servant.* 'Tis as much as if he had said, *I will hear what God the Lord will speak.* Agreeable to this is the stile of a Redeemer: he tells *Ananias* of *Saul, He is a chosen vessel unto* ME, *to bear* MY *name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.* *Ananias* comes to him

2 Thes. ii. 4. Joh. v. 18. Acts x. 36. 1 Cor. ix. 22. Acts ix. 6. Psal. cxvi. 16. lxxxv. 8. Acts ix. 15.

with

SERM. XII. with that meſſage, *Brother Saul, the Lord, even* JESUS *that appear'd to thee in the way that thou cameſt, has ſent me that thou mighteſt receive thy ſight, and be fill'd with the Holy Ghoſt.* We are told in this place that the Lord who ſent him was Jeſus. Compare this with *Acts* xxii. 24. where you find the ſame ſtory, and there it is, *The God of our fathers has choſen thee, that thou ſhouldſt know his will, and ſee the juſt One, and hear the voice of his mouth; and now, why tarrieſt thou? waſh away thy ſins, and be baptized, calling on the name of the* LORD. What Lord? You read afterwards, *I ſaw* HIM, *ſaying unto me, Make haſte, and get thee quickly out of Jeruſalem, for they will not receive thy teſtimony concerning* ME.

ver. 17.

'Tis with this mixture of characters, ſome relating to the humane nature and ſome to the divine, that he repeats the ſtory to King *Agrippa.* As he there ſaith, he receiv'd his miſſion immediately from Chriſt himſelf, who ſpake thus to him, *I will make thee a miniſter and a witneſs of the things that thou haſt ſeen, and of thoſe things in which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles to whom now I ſend thee, to open their eyes, and to turn 'em from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan to God, to give 'em remiſſion of ſins, and an inheritance among them that are ſanctified by faith in* ME. Chriſt undertook to deliver him from the people, and with regard to that promiſe the Apoſtle ſaith, *Having obtained help from* GOD, *I continue to this day.* "He that thus far "help'd me is the ſame God who ſaid that he would "deliver me." How would they go upon a deſign of opening peoples eyes, and turning 'em from Satan, if it was not a *God* who *cauſed them to triumph, and made manifeſt the good ſavour of his knowledge by them in every place?*

xxvi. 16, 17, 18.

ver. 22.

2 Cor. ii. 14.

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4. The Gospel gives us a manifestation of the great God under the character of a *Judge*. This agrees with those sentiments that have left some tincture of religion all over the world. The heathen have their inward fears of a judgment to come; that there will be future enquiries: Conscience witnesses to this according to its office; for *it is the candle of the Lord searching into the innermost parts of the belly*. And yet this opinion, that mankind believes in general, is brought in among those that we never could have without a particular revelation, that *God is judge of all, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant: And the blood of sprinkling speaks better things than the blood of* Abel. Those two principles seem to be riveted in us; idolatry has not choak'd 'em, that *it is appointed for all men once to die, and after that the judgment*. Heb. xii. 24.

Now, he that performs this work must be a God. The question is not whether he that sits upon the throne, will not appear in *our nature*; but his *capacity* to go thro' the grand inquest must arise from *another nature*. As the Son of man, he might be pure, *holy, harmless, undefil'd, and separate from sinners*; but this could not furnish him with the knowledge of the secrets of all hearts: And therefore, tho' he is like the sons of men, yet he speaks to his people in the language of the great God, *I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am he, who searches the hearts and reins, and I will give to every one of you according to your works*. It may be said of such an one, *Great is this Lord, and of great power, and his understanding is infinite*. If *we must all appear before the judgment seat of* CHRIST, *there to receive what we have done in the body, whether it be good or evil,* it argues the highest perfection in him. Rev. ii. 23. Ps. cxlvii. 5. 2 Cor. v. 10.

The *Jews* could never conceive that an ability to judge the world was separable from the Divine

Nature

SERM. XII. Nature. None but he who *form'd the ſpirit of man within him*, is capable of ſearching the heart and the reins. The Lord God is *the judge of the earth: he that planted the eye, he that form'd the ear. Our God ſhall come, and not keep ſilence: he ſhall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth that he may judge his people: the heavens ſhall declare his righteouſneſs, for* GOD *is judge* HIMSELF. *Hear, O my people, and I will ſpeak, I am God, even thy God.* Thus the *Jews* were oblig'd to think; and can we ſuppoſe that the Goſpel has committed the ſupreme judgment to one who has not infinite perfections? Did their diſpenſation under the old Teſtament proclaim, and that ſo truly, that *God was judge of all:* And does ours under the new, by placing it in the hands of the Son, make it to be the work of a creature? Muſt we ſay that the *Jewiſh* religion over-rated the matter, and that the *Chriſtian* ſhews us a great deal leſs will do than we were taught to imagine before! That tho' they us'd to think that nothing beneath the Divine Nature was fit for the judgment ſeat, yet we find that a mere titular God will do well enough for the greateſt ſolemnity that ever was perform'd? What ſenſe then muſt we put upon thoſe words? *I ſaw a great white throne, and Him that ſat on it, from whoſe face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for 'em.* I can't but think when he ſpeaks of this mighty Perſon, he means the ſame whom we read of in the next verſe, *I ſaw the dead, ſmall and great, ſtand before* GOD. Tho' he is call'd the Son of man, when he enters upon the judgment, yet he is then ſaid to come *in the glory of the Father.*

Pſ. xciv. 1, 2, 9. l. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Rev. xx. 11, 12.

5. God is manifeſted to us as one whom we have diſhonour'd; the offended party. *All fleſh has ſinn'd and fallen ſhort of the glory of God.* This is the voice of all true religion; and thus he is diſcover'd

Rom. iii. 23.

cover'd in and thro' a mediator. *Behold*, saith he to the *Jews*, *I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepar'd. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him; but if thou shalt indeed obey* HIS *voice, and do all that I speak* (you see how these are mingled and wove together) *then will I be an enemy to thine enemies, and an adversary to thine adversaries, for mine Angel shall go before thee.* This he repeats, *I will send an Angel before thee, and I will drive out the inhabitants.* I take the promise to be the same, when he saith, MY *presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest* No less than this would satisfie *Moses*, for his answer is, *If* THY *presence go not with me, carry us not up hence* (they could take up with no lower than a God) *for wherein shall it be honour, that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that* THOU *goest with us?* What he calls *his Angel* in one edition of the promise, he calls *his presence* in another. The Prophet brings both these terms together, *In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence* (He that was always before him, daily his delight, he) *sav'd 'em, he bare 'em, and carried 'em all the days of old.* This Angel they must obey, and not provoke; but they did provoke him when they refus'd to go into the promis'd land. *They tempted the Lord saying, Is the Lord, is* Jehovah, *among us or not?* He calls this *the day of provocation, and the day of temptation in the wilderness.* Then they provok'd him, or they provok'd his Angel, contrary to the rule that had been given 'em. This in the new Testament is call'd *their tempting of Christ.* And we are told, that *Christ is a Son over his own house, whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of our hope firm unto the end.* We are not to use him

SERM. XII.

Exod. xxiii. 20.

ch. xxxiii. 2.

ver. 14.

Isa. lxiii. 9, 10.

Ps. xcv. 8.

1 Cor. x. 9.

Heb. iii. 6.

as

SERM. XII. as they did; fly off at laſt, when we ſhould juſt go into the promis'd land; give way and fall back, but hold on our hope unto the end: *For the Holy*
ver. 7. *Ghoſt ſaith, To day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts:* Whoſe voice? the voice of GOD, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *The great God, the great King above all Gods, who has the ſtrength of hills in his hand:* The voice of CHRIST, ſaith the Apoſtle. Judge then by comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual, whether or no he who was manifeſt in the fleſh is not the *God of Iſrael.*

We ſee that God who is a conſuming fire, becomes converſible by appearing in our nature. Diſobedience to him, as the light that came into the world, is the great condemnation, which ſhews the importance of his name. *If ye believe not that*
Joh. iii. 36. *I am he, ye ſhall die in your ſins: he that believes not is condemn'd already; the wrath of God abides on him.* And, is want of duty to a creature ſo very dangerous? Muſt it be a damning thing that we fail in our reſpect to one who is not God? I look upon that as the greateſt abomination which the *Papiſts* have brought into their religion, that a contempt of the Pope, or diſobedience to his laws, is a higher crime than blaſphemy. And what is it that makes their notion ſo horrible, but the infinite diſtance of a poor ſinful man from the ſupreme God? If he was really as great and good as he declares himſelf, he might demand all this homage. And ſhall we ſuppoſe the ſame reproach upon Chriſtianity itſelf? Shall it be more dangerous to refuſe Chriſt Jeſus, than to violate a righteous law? Is the main ſin of which the holy Spirit *convinces*
Joh. xvi. 9. *the world*, their *not believing on* HIM? Is it this that binds all our other guilt upon us? And is not He a God whom we thus diſtinguiſh? if not, we are guilty of *ſerving the creature more than the Creator.*

6. When

6. When God manifests himself, it is as the author of our *reconciliation*. He has *a desire to the work of his own hands*; without this discovery all the rest had been in vain. 'Tis to no purpose that he is our Creator, if by breaking his law, we have reduc'd things to such an extremity, that *he that made us will have no mercy on us, and he that form'd us will shew us no favour*. He is our Law-giver, but that raises in us no other than dreadful expectations; for *as many as are under the law are under the curse, because it is written, Cursed is every one, who continues not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do 'em*. As he is our judge, we are fill'd with the terrors of the Lord: there is *a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation*; but in this revelation, *the love and kindness of God our Saviour towards man has appear'd*.

Gal. iii. 10.

Heb. x. 27.

Tit. iii. 4.

Now, he that makes this discovery can be no other than a God: he made known his resentment, and did it in a way suitable to his Majesty: *Who knows the power of thine anger? according to thy fear, so is thy wrath!* and from Him the day-star on high is to shine forth: he employ'd his messengers in all ages to give notice of this salvation: Prophets, and Kings, and righteous men have foretold what should happen in the fulness of time. And *He who at sundry times, and in divers manners spake unto the fathers in times past by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by his Son*. What was there in this Son more than the other messengers, if we are not to consider him as a God? 'Tis the *message* that we are chiefly concern'd in, the *thing* itself that is brought, and not the *person* that brings it: so that 'tis the same to us, whether it comes by a shepherd or a king, by a man or an Angel. But when he tells us of speaking *by his Son*, 'tis plain we are call'd to admire not only the doctrine but the preacher, who is *the heir*

Psal. xc. 11.

Heb. i. 1.

of

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of all things, the brightneſs of the Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon. To this agrees what our Lord ſaith in the parable, That a king ſent to his ſubjects one ſervant, and him they ſhamefully entreated; again he ſent others, whom they wounded, and ſton'd, and kill'd: at laſt, ſaith he, *I will ſend to 'em my ſon.* The demand of their allegiance took its value from the king himſelf, to whom they ow'd it, not from the quality of the men that brought it. But when the *ſon* came they were to conſider not merely what he *ſaid*, but who he *was*. This, ſay they, *is the heir*; he is a party in the claim, *therefore come let us kill him.*

If there was not the ſame regard due to Chriſt that there is to the Father, we ſhould be no gainers by his coming, John the Baptiſt might have done as well. God could have told us all by Him that he did by Jeſus, and might have convey'd the ſame power of working miracles to the one, that was ſo ſurprizing in the other; but ſpeaking to us *by his Son*, is taking a way that is infinitely above all the reſt. Others are ſaid to *ſpeak on earth*, and he, as diſtinct from every one beſides, does alone *ſpeak from heaven. No man aſcended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven.* In other caſes the meſſage greaten'd the man: nothing higher could be ſaid of a Prophet, than that the word of the Lord was with him. *Jeremiah* was a child, *Amos* a gatherer of ſycamore fruit, but they were ennobled by the word they came with, becauſe it was not their own; they had receiv'd it from God. But in this caſe the meſſage takes a value from the perſon that brings it, it does not give him his dignity, but rather ſuppoſes it: 'tis to be taken for granted, that *he is the brightneſs of the Father's glory;* if he was not *that*, the diſpenſation that he fill'd would not have exceeded all the reſt;

Heb. xii. 25.

Job iii. 13.

but

but *being* so, he did *by himself* purge away our sins. SERM. XIII.

He preach'd righteousness and salvation in another way than we do. The word of reconciliation is committed to us, but we send people to *him*, as he invited 'em to himself: *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink; in him was life, and that life was the light of men. John the Baptist* was a burning and a shining light, yet *he was not that light*, in the more eminent sense of the word, but only *sent to bear witness of that light; for Christ is the true light that lightens every man who comes into the world.* These things shew us, that He of whom they are spoken, can be no other than the true God. All the revelation of the Bible places him in that view. We are taught to regard him as such; to believe in him, to come to him, and to rest our souls upon his righteousness and strength. Joh. vii. 37.

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Sept. 28. 1718.

VII. GOD is MANIFESTED to us as the author or contriver of that righteousness in which we are justified. Here the light of nature fails us; the world with all *their wisdom knew not God.* They had apprehensions that he made 'em, rul'd 'em, and would judge 'em: nay, he *left not himself without witness* to his mercy, *giving 'em rain and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness.* They found his bounty in this world, and had some loose and general hopes of meeting it in another; but the way how this should be brought 1 Cor. i. 21. Acts xiv. 17.

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about with a glory to his juſtice, was a *wiſdom hid from ages and generations.*

Now, by the Goſpel we are not only told, that

2 Cor. v. 19, 21. *God is reconciling the world unto himſelf*, but the method into which he has thrown the whole deſign, lies open to our faith and love; that it is *in Chriſt Jeſus, not imputing our treſpaſſes to us, but having made him to be ſin for us, who knew no ſin, we are made the righteouſneſs of God in him.* 'Tis here alone we can learn what ſecurity he has given to the honour of his name, and what compaſs he takes in

Rom. iii. 25, 26. the diffuſions of his love. *Him has God ſet forth to be a propitiation for our ſins thro' faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, thro' the forbearance of God; to declare at this time his righteouſneſs, that he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him that believes in Jeſus.* The diſpenſation that ſhews us all this, is the moſt fitted to our happineſs. *What the law could not do in that it was weak thro' the fleſh*, the impoſſible of the law τὸ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου God has brought about by

ch. viii. 3, 4. *ſending his Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and by ſin* (the imputation of it, or the ſacrifice that was made for it) *has condemn'd ſin in the fleſh, that the righteouſneſs of the law may be fulfill'd in us.* Under the new Teſtament we have the beſt light both into the deſign that God has form'd, and the methods by which he will promote it. *The law*

Heb. vii. 19. *made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God.* This made the Apoſtle ſay he was *not aſham'd of the Goſpel of Chriſt.* The expreſſion contains a great deal more than it opens: he was not aſham'd, *i. e.* he delighted, he gloried in it: no labour could make him weary, no ſufferings could make him bluſh, becauſe this

Rom. i. 16, 17. Goſpel *was the power of God to the ſalvation of every one that believes*; and that which conveys ſo noble a title to it is, becauſe *therein the righteouſneſs of God is reveal'd from faith to faith.* Here

Here faith ſees what it has to truſt to, and where the ſoul muſt keep relying: do it over and over again, and that is upon *the righteouſneſs of* GOD. This is the name that it often goes by. We are told that the *Jews being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, have not ſubmitted themſelves to the righteouſneſs of* GOD. Rom. x. 3. This title, the righteouſneſs of God, is to be underſtood of a righteouſneſs that God has contriv'd, and *God* brought in: that the Perſon who gives it to us is *God:* that this is the ſenſe of the word, appears from the oppoſition in which it is plac'd to a righteouſneſs of *their own.* What was this but their obedience either to the moral or the ceremonial law? Now, *that* might be call'd the righteouſneſs of God, as their zeal for it was a *zeal of God,* ver. 1. It's what he had appointed and commanded; nay, he tells 'em, this ſhould be *their righteouſneſs before the nations of the earth;* but then, it is what themſelves *brought in.* Now *the righteouſneſs of God,* which bears the name in this place, is diſtinguiſh'd from theirs, and the difference between 'em is in nothing elſe but this, that their righteouſneſs was the work of men, the obedience of creatures, but the other was the obedience of a God. Our Saviour when he died had this before him, as the Angel *Gabriel* tells *Daniel,* that *the Meſſiah was to be cut off, but not for Himſelf:* Who was it for then? for thoſe that wanted his benefits, when *he finiſh'd tranſgreſſion, made an end of ſin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in an everlaſting righteouſneſs.* This was it that the *Jews* were ignorant of, and refus'd to ſubmit themſelves unto: they could not take Chriſt as *the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believes.* Rom. x. 4. That which they rejected was the righteouſneſs of God, which none but an infinite nature was capable of giving to the world, and therefore the A-

Dan. ix. 26.

SERM. XIII. Phil. iii. 9. postle is very full and particular in describing it. His desire was to be *found in Christ, not having on his own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is thro' the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.* Faith regards it as it stands in itself, and then receives or applies it as belonging to us. What faith depends on is *the righteousness of God*; something that an infinite Nature has done.

Upon this account the Person who came to save us in the name of the Lord is call'd, as no creature can be, *Jehovah our righteousness:* that's an incommunicable title, what God never gave to another: *Thou alone whose name is Jehovah, art the most High over all the earth.* There are Gods many, and Lords many, but there is no more than one *Jehovah:* and if He in whom we are justified joins the greatest word that we have in any language with the relation that he bears to us, if he is call'd *Jehovah our righteousness*, it shews that he who made the atonement is God. Under this title, which is all divine, has he recommended himself to the faith and the joys of his people: *Sing unto God, sing praises to his name, extol him that rides upon the heavens, by his name* JAH, *and rejoice before him.* His riding upon the heavens does plainly belong to those *chariots of God which are twenty thousand, even thousands of Angels.* And *when* does he use 'em? what mighty period do these words refer to? You will see by the next verse, *Thou hast ascended up on high*; and for this we are to extol him by his name *Jah.* The author of that righteousness in which we are to be found must be a God; one that is *fellow to the Lord of hosts.*

Jer. xxiii. 6. Pf. lxxxiii. 18. Pf. lxviii. 4. ver. 17. ver. 18. Zech. xiii. 7.

This gave a virtue to all his sufferings, and therefore we read of *the church of God,* which HE *purchas'd with his own blood.* If an Angel had come down into our nature, blood would never have been

Acts xx. 28.

been aſcrib'd to him any farther than he was man. It was only the humane nature that could bleed, and therefore whatever is more than man was not to *endure* but to *dignifie* the ſufferings. Now, on purpoſe to let us know, that nothing but a divine atonement could anſwer the demands of a divine juſtice, we are told that the purchaſe was made by *the blood of God. The blood of Chriſt, who thro' the eternal Spirit offer'd himſelf without ſpot to God, is to purge our conſcience.* And *the God of peace brought again from the dead the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, thro' the blood of the everlaſting covenant.* Upon this, God's pardoning a ſinner becomes an act of equity: *the blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth from all ſin, and therefore he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins.*

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Heb. ix. 14. xiii. 20. 1 Joh. i. 7, 9.

8. God is manifeſt as the author and fountain of thoſe graces by which we are wrought into his image. In order to be happy with him, we muſt be conform'd to him, being *renew'd in the ſpirit of our minds, and putting on the new man,* which κατὰ Θεὸν according to God, *is created in righteouſneſs.* It is impoſſible that heaven itſelf ſhould make him glorious, and us bleſſed, if *his* nature was full of reſentment, and *ours* of provocation. If two cannot *walk* together except they be agreed, much leſs can they *live* together in the duration of another ſtate: that would only be an eternal broil, an everlaſting jealouſie. Now, as he has reveal'd himſelf to be our lawgiver, ſo from Him we are to derive the whole of that Being, that will make us the *people of his hand, and the ſheep of his paſture.*

Eph. iv. 23. 24.

And the Goſpel tells us upon this head, that all our religion comes from the *only name that is given under heaven among men.* That's all along the language of the new Teſtament: *The law was given by Moſes, but grace and truth came by Jeſus Chriſt;* not barely the revelation, but the convey-

Acts iv. 12. Joh. i. 17.

SERM. XIII. ance came by him: for as he was *full of grace and truth*, ſo *of his fulneſs we have receiv'd, and grace for grace. This is the record that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that has the Son has life, and he that has not the Son of God has not life.* 'Tis expreſs'd in ſuch a way as tells us, we can only have it by a myſtical union with him. *We are in him that is true, even his Son Jeſus Chriſt: this is the true God, and this is eternal life: in him was life, and that life was the light of men.* In him was life, as in a God; for if you take it in any lower ſenſe, 'tis no more than may be ſaid of a man, or of a worm. But, as he tells us in another place, *As the Father has life in himſelf, ſo has he given to the Son to have life in himſelf*; and, *as the Father quickens the dead, ſo the Son quickens whom he will.* It may be ſaid of us as to a religious exiſtence, *In him we live and move, and have our being: as the branch cannot bear fruit of itſelf, except it abide in the vine, no more can we except we abide in him: without him we can do nothing.* When grace is begun or receiv'd, *Chriſt is form'd in us*; *he dwells in our hearts by faith.* By the union that he has with his people, every principle is maintain'd, as he tells the Father, *I in them, and thou in me.* Tho' he was then going out of the world, he ſtill deſires to be *in them,* which cannot be underſtood of an external converſation with 'em. *I have declar'd thy name unto them, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou haſt loved me may be in them, and I in them.* He conſiders himſelf in them, tho' he was to be in heaven, and they upon earth, according to the promiſe that he had formerly given 'em; *Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo, and in that day ye ſhall know that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and I in you.* From this the Apoſtle argues an immortality both in our principles and our heaven: *If Chriſt be in us, the ſpirit is life,* and *Chriſt in us is our hope of glory.* Now,

1 Joh. v. 10.
ver. 20.
Joh. i. 4.
Joh. v. 26.
ver. 21.
Joh xv. 4, 5.
Gal. iv. 19.
Eph. iii. 17.
Joh. xvii. 23.
Joh. xvii. ult.
ch. xiv. 19, 20.
Rom. viii. 10.

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Now, He that sustains these characters can be no other than God. It is *the one God and Father of all, who is above all, and thro' all, and in you all.* We have a communion with the Angels, but are never said to be *in them,* or have them *in us*; whereas, if the expression means nothing but a mutual fellowship, it might well enough be us'd in that sense. But the word signifies a great deal more; an union, subsistence, and a derivation, that none but the Divine Nature can give us. *God dwells in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. Whoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God. God is love, and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him.* If there is no more design'd by this dwelling in God than our doing what pleases him, we might be said to dwell in the Saints and Angels; but the words signify an happiness which none but a God can give. They express something that is peculiar to Him, and what would never be affirm'd of us with relation to any creature. Therefore when it is said that *Christ is in us*, it denotes His glory as well as our dependence.

Eph. iv. 6.

1 John iv. 12. Ver. 15, 16.

There is no such union with any but a God. We are *born of the incorruptible seed,* this is the same thing with our *tasting that the Lord is gracious.* 'Tis a phrase that we often meet with in the book of Psalms, *O taste and see that the Lord is good!* And it is too much to be affirm'd of a creature; no finite being is capable of giving us such an experience. Now, what Lord is that whom we have *tasted to be gracious*, and to whom we must be still *coming as to a living stone?* who is this that our faith is held to as its object where it fixes, as its fountain where it feeds! who, besides the supreme Being, can give us the first experience of religion,

1 Pet. i. 23. Ch. ii. 3.

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and call us to a continual dependence upon Him? 'Tis too much for any but himself to do it. And yet this Lord, this living stone, can be no other than our Saviour: for he is describ'd afterwards by his lower character, as *disallow'd of men*; *but chosen of God, and precious.* From him we have deriv'd the first life, from him we must derive the rest; by him we are *living stones, and are built up a spiritual house.*

Ver. 4.

Ver. 5.

Our graces are his work, and what does that import but an Almighty arm? *David* ascribes it to no less a power than what made the world; *Create in me a clean heart, O God*: They that have this change are *born of God.* Who must He be that shall make a *people willing in the day of his power*? He gave *Paul* his commission; he sent him *to turn the Gentiles from darkness to light:* And yet none but that *God* who *caused light to shine out of darkness* can *shine into our hearts.* He saith to his Disciples, *my peace I give unto you, not as the world gives give I unto you.* And what was this but Omnipotence, a *creating the fruit of the lips peace, peace,* a sending out his Word, and healing them.

Psal. li. 10.

John i. 13

Psal. cx. 3.

Acts xxvi. 18.

2 Cor. iv. 6.

John xiv. 27.

Isa. lvii. 19.

9. God has manifested himself as the great example and pattern of all our holiness. Religion is a likeness to Him. This was his command to the *Jews, Be ye holy, for I am holy.* He would never direct our thoughts in those unlimited terms to any but himself. *He that does the truth comes to the light that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in* God. And therefore,

1 Pet. i. 16.

John iii. 21.

If we find that Christ is propos'd as our pattern in language that only belongs to an infinite Being, we shall see that it is in maintenance of his character. 'Tis true, his obedience to the law *under which he was made*, is the proper example that he has left behind him for us to follow his steps. We are to be *followers of him as dear children*, and to *walk in love*,

Eph. v. 1.

love, as he has loved us; and that gives us *boldneſs in the day of Judgment, that as he was, ſo we are in this preſent world.* SERM. XIII. 1 John iv. 17.

But, beſides this, our Faith regards him as a pattern under a more glorious conſideration. Our religion, even in heaven, is a reſemblance of him: *We ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.* 1 John iii. 2. Like whom? Like the Great God; *David* would not uſe the language about any other: *As for me, I ſhall behold thy face in righteouſneſs, when I awake, I ſhall be ſatisfied with* THY *likeneſs.* Pſal. xvii. 15. And again, *With Thee is the fountain of life, and in* THY *light we ſhall ſee light.* xxxvi. 9. Nor does the Apoſtle ſpeak of any lower perſon, when he ſaith, *What manner of love has the Father beſtow'd upon us, that we ſhould be call'd the Sons of* GOD? 1 John iii. 1. tho' without any variation of the phraſe he goes on to tell us, *Therefore the world knows us not, becauſe it knew not* HIM. It knew not that God, whoſe Sons we are. *Beloved, now we are the Sons of God; and when* HE, to whom we are thus related, *ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.* Ver. 2. What does he ſay leſs, than that we ſhall behold his face in righteouſneſs, and be ſatisfy'd with his likeneſs? If one of theſe verſes contains as much as the other, it means as much. If the words run as high, certainly the ſenſe muſt do ſo too. Nay, from theſe offices of our Faith, he goes on to tell us, that *he who has this hope in him purifies himſelf even as* HE *is pure.* Ver. 3.

Is any but a God to be ſuch a rule and pattern of our religion! Are not theſe words too much for a creature, *Be ye holy, for I am holy?* Yes ſurely: *Hannah*'s obſervation is eternally true; *There is none holy as the Lord; for there is none beſides him.* 1 Sam. ii. 2. Our Saviour ſaith, *there is none good but One, that is God*; and yet He himſelf is call'd *the Holy One.* Mat. xix. 17. Imitation is one great act of reverence; and therefore Acts iii. 14.

SERM. XIII.

fore when any example below a God is set before us, 'tis always under qualifications; *Be ye followers of me*, saith the Apostle, *even as I also am of Christ.* But absolute, unreserv'd, conformity is only to him that made us. Thus we express our homage as well as our affection, in a way that we dare not use to an Angel. *If any man serve* ME, saith Christ, *let him follow* ME.

1 Cor. xi. 1.

John xii. 26.

10. Another manifestation that we have of God is, as he is the author and giver of those joys that are laid up for us in another world. There can be no happiness but what comes from Him. *Thou wilt guide me by thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to* THY *glory.* THOU *wilt shew me the path of life*, as if life were no where else; *in* THY *presence there is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.* This made him say, *Whom have I in heaven but* THEE? He hop'd to meet there with *an innumerable company of Angels, and the Spirits of just men made perfect*, to sit down with *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*; but none of these could make him blessed. He only regarded his God under that character: *Thou art my portion for ever. The Lord is my portion, saith my Soul.* And indeed, upon this head, human reason agrees with the light of the Gospel, that no less than an infinite nature can satisfy either the necessity or the desires of a Soul. And therefore whoever represents himself as the author of every good and perfect gift, must be either *the Father of lights, or an impostor.*

Psal. lxxiii. 24. — xvi. 2.

Heb. xii. 22, 23.

Psal. lxxiii. 26.

Lam. iii. 24.

Jam. i. 17.

Here the question is, whether under this notion our thoughts are not call'd up to a Mediator. He did not only appear *to abolish death*, but *to bring life and immortality to light*, He made heaven better known than ever it was before: But, besides that, 'tis his gift as well as his discovery. Our happiness is a *being with Christ*; that is, *being ever with the Lord: He that sits upon the throne shall dwell among*

2 Tim. i. 10.

Phil. i. 23. 1 Thes. iv. 17. Rev. vii. 15.

mong 'em. Upon this authority he ſpeaks, *They* SERM.
are my ſheep, and, they ſhall never periſh; but I give XIII.
to 'em eternal life, and no man ſhall pluck 'em out of
MY *hand.* He adds, as a farther ſecurity, *My Fa-* John x.
ther who gave 'em to me is greater than all, and none 28, 29.
ſhall pluck 'em out of my Father's hands. If he was to be conſider'd only in his human nature, what he here ſaith would be no argument. For tho' the Father that gave 'em to him was greater than all, yet if himſelf was not ſo too, they might be loſt; for it was *His own hand* that held 'em. Their protection is not taken from the greatneſs of the giver, but from the greatneſs of the keeper. And therefore, in aſſerting that none ſhall pluck 'em out of *his hand*, he goes upon the ground, that's mention'd in the very next words, *I and my Father are* Ver. 30.
one.

Does it only mean one in deſign, in conſent and agreement? that's no more than may be affirm'd of any Saint or Angel in heaven. Every inhabitant there may ſay, that God and He are one; what God ſaith He approves. But ſuch an oneneſs is no argument that thoſe creatures can hold faſt whatever the Father has given 'em. The words under this interpretation may be applied to *Adam.* God and he were one, when he was firſt put into paradiſe; there was a full harmony between 'em. He had a principle of grace and holineſs; the Father that gave him theſe was greater than all; but yet he could not ſay, that none was able to pluck 'em out of his hands; for they were pluck'd out. Now, if Chriſt's being one with the Father does include an ability *in himſelf* to keep what is given him, it muſt be upon the ſame foundation, that He (as well as the Father) *is greater than all*; for otherwiſe what he here ſaith could not be true. Without this he hath no power, no right to give eternal life.

SERM. XIII.

Consider him in our nature, and this is what he never assum'd. When the two sons of *Zebedee* came with their mother, begging that the one of 'em might sit at his right hand, and the other at his left in his kingdom, he tells 'em it was not his to give, but *it should be given to them for whom it was prepar'd of his Father.* So that, you see, he disdains even the power of granting preferments upon earth; as man, he did not pretend to this: and therefore, if He, that saith *this is not mine to give*, talks in another place of giving what is infinitely greater, he must be consider'd as bearing two natures. He that would not venture to fix a precedence among his people, would never have dar'd to say *they shall not perish*, if he was not one with the Father in the greatest sense that the word can bear.

Rom. ii. 5, 6. Rev. xxii. 12, 20.

'Tis *the righteous judgment of* God *that renders to every man according to his deeds.* And yet, *He that comes quickly has his reward with him, to give every man according as his work shall be*; and who is this, but *he that testify'd of those things*; you have the sense of the church upon that head: *Amen, even so come,* Lord Jesus. It is plain, thus the *Jews* understood him, and therefore would have ston'd him for blasphemy, because, say they, *Thou being a man, makest thyself God.* If he meant no more by these words, *I and my Father are One*, than what a modern interpretation amounts to, he might easily have pleaded not guilty. But he rather heightens the provocation, by repeating his pretensions: Is it not written in your law, *I said ye are gods? if he called them gods to whom the word of God came, say ye of him whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God?*

John x. 33.

—34, 35, 36,

He here fixes the great distinction betwixt himself and the whole world, that they were people

to

to whom the word of God came; He was the only person that brought it: *Sanctifying and sending him into the world*, are titles that may be understood in a lower sense of all the Prophets; but it's plain he uses 'em here in a way that is peculiar to himself; therefore he tells 'em that he does not call himself God in the way that he has call'd men so. Not by virtue of an office; no office could make him the Son of God: This title by which he was to be known signified more than ever belong'd to them, whom he had called *gods*. What then does he put it upon? *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.* What are those! The works that his Father commanded? *That* any good man or Prophet might have said: but it is evident, he speaks of those works which none but the Father himself could do; and from hence he concludes a great deal more than a Divine assistance, which God had given to his servants in all ages. And upon this ground he asserts a personal union, *Tho' ye believe not me, i. e.* not my testimony, *yet believe the works, that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.* In me, not as he was in the Prophets, and those that us'd to surprize the world with miracles.

SERM. XIII. Ver. 37. Ver. 38.

And it's plain, the *Jews* perceiv'd that he spoke of something more than a deriv'd help from the Father, for that they would never have denied him. *They knew he was a teacher come from God; for no man could do the works that he did, except God was with him.* But they took his words to signify an equality with God; and therefore after all the explications he gave of 'em, it is observ'd *They sought again to take him.* And this was the only provocation, as it had been before: *They sought the more to kill him, because he said that God was his Father, making himself equal with God:* And this they pleaded

Ver. 39. John v. 18.

SERM. XIII.

ed afterwards, *We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, becauſe he made himſelf the Son of God.*

—xix. 7. It is thus that he ſpeaks to his own Diſciples,
John xiv. 1. *Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me*, with an equal faith, the ſame in kind and in degree: *I go to prepare*
—2, 3. *a place for you, and I will come again, and receive you to myſelf.* The fitting up a happineſs for us, and taking us into it, were never underſtood to be any other than the works of a God: *Thou ſhalt guide me by thy counſel, and receive me to thy glory; whom have I in heaven but Thee?* And on purpoſe to eſtabliſh them in this opinion, he adds, a little while
Ver. 6. afterward, *No man comes unto the Father, but by me*; but to let 'em ſee that he who brings 'em to the Father is equal to the Father, he delivers himſelf in ſuch words as muſt either bear this ſenſe, or we
Ver. 7. ſhall charge him with quibbling, *If ye had known me, you ſhould have known my Father alſo, henceforth ye have known him, and ſeen him.* They did not underſtand it of ſeeing him in his works, but take it for a perſonal diſcovery which they imagin'd had
Ver. 8, 9. never been given: Therefore ſaith *Philip, Shew us the Father, and it ſufficeth us. Jeſus ſaith to him, have I been ſo long time with you, and haſt thou not known me, Philip?* Yes, he knew him; but what's that to the purpoſe? Well, *He that has ſeen me, has ſeen the Father.* Certainly, in another ſenſe than we may be ſaid to ſee him in the wonders that his ſer-
—10. vants have wrought: The reaſon he repeats is, *Believeſt thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I ſpeak unto you, I ſpeak not of myſelf, but the Father who is in me does the works.*

SERMON

SERMON XIV.

Oct. 12. 1718.

III. WE are now to conſider that particular MANIFESTATION of God which the text has led us to, and this is ſaid to be IN THE FLESH. Religion is nothing elſe but the diſcovery that God has made of himſelf, a revelation that's given out from him. Take religion as a doctrine, and it is this revelation expos'd; take it as a principle, and it is this revelation implanted, filling the mind, poſſeſſing the will, and moving the affections; take it as a practice, and it is this revelation drawn out and return'd in duty and love. *'Tis life eternal to know the only true God.* The ways that he has taken to open out himſelf, and be known to the world, are very different. *He has at ſundry times, and in divers manners, ſpoke in times paſt to our Fathers by the Prophets,* and *in theſe laſt days has ſpoken to us by his Son.* I will juſt mention the moſt remarkable of 'em as an introduction to the happy diſcloſure that you have in my text: and in theſe you will ſee, how the revelation of a God has been as the light of the morning, ſhining more and more, till it came to a perfect day.

SERM. XIV.

Gal. i. 16.

John xvii. 3.

Heb. i. 1.

1. He has manifeſted himſelf in voices: He us'd to ſpeak out to the world. *Adam and his wife heard the voice of the Lord God in the midſt of the garden:* Thus he dealt both with good and bad.

Gen. iii. 8.

You

SERM. XIV. You find him arguing with *Cain*, as well as *testifying to the gifts of Abel*. This way expir'd by degrees: And, then

Heb. xi. 4.

Job xxxiii. 15, 16. 2. He manifested himself by *dreams and visions of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men, and slumbrings upon the bed:* Then *he opens the ears of men, and seals their instruction.* This was also without any distinction betwixt his people and his enemies. Thus *he came to Abimelech in a dream by night.* In like manner he *met Laban the Syrian*, and convey'd into his heart an awful charge, not to speak to *Jacob* either good or bad: *He rebuk'd him in the night.* Thus he instructed *Pharaoh*, and terrify'd *Nebuchadnezzar.* For *there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and makes known what shall be in the latter Days.*

Gen. xx. 3. xxxi. 24. Ver. 42. Dan. xi. 28.

3. He us'd to manifest himself by raising up eminent persons, either as *Prophets* to teach his people, or as *Saviours* to defend 'em. The revelation was then contracted, not given to mankind in general, but made known to those whom he had chosen. He took this way to bring the children of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, by appointing *Moses* to be *the shepherd of his flock, and putting his Spirit within him.* And as it was the encouragement that he gave to *Moses* himself, *I have known thee by name, and thou hast found grace in my sight*; so he brings it in for his vindication against the envy of *Aaron* and *Miriam.* If *there be a Prophet among you, I will make myself known to him in a vision, and speak to him in a dream: My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all my house*; *with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches, and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold; wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?* From hence you see, that what had been the general experience of mankind, came to be more restrain'd. It belong'd to an office, and was not

Isa. lxiii. 2.

Num. xii. 6, 7, 8.

was not given in common as it us'd to be. And therefore it is obſerv'd, that *there aroſe not a Prophet ſince in Iſrael, like unto Moſes, whom the Lord knew face to face. Of old time, holy men of God ſpake as they were mov'd by the Holy Ghoſt.* SERM. XIV.

4. He manifeſted himſelf in miracles. This was for the conviction of the world. As *Moſes* ſaith, *Hereby ye ſhall know that the Lord has ſent me to do all theſe works, and that I have not done 'em of my own mind.* He ſuſpected the incredulity of the people before he took his commiſſion, *They will not believe my voice, for they will ſay, the Lord has not appear'd unto thee.* And therefore God order'd him to caſt down his rod, which became a ſerpent, and do it a ſecond time, which reſtor'd it into a rod, *That they may believe that the Lord God of their Fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob has appear'd unto thee.* And it is obſerv'd, that when *Aaron* ſpake the words to the people, *Moſes* did the ſigns in their ſight, *And the people believ'd, and bow'd down their heads and worſhipp'd.* Thus *he ſhew'd his people the power of his works, that he might give 'em the heritage of the heathen.*

5. He manifeſted himſelf, in a written law. One part of it was writ with *the finger of God* upon two tables of ſtone, but theſe were broke, when the people for whom they were deſign'd had wander'd into a ſuperſtition of their own. After that, *Moſes commanded them a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob.* This he did according to the pattern ſhew'd him in the mount, for *he was faithful in all things to him who had appointed him.* Thus the prophets, whom he rais'd up afterwards, were directed and fill'd; that which they regarded was *the Spirit of Chriſt that was in 'em,* and the teſtimony that this gave to our ſalvation. *All Scripture was given by inſpiration of God.* Heb. iii. 2. 1 Pet. i. 11. 2 Tim. iii. 16.

SERM. XIV.

6. He manifeſted himſelf by ſeveral ordinances. He gave 'em ſtatutes and judgments by which they were to live. He was *known in their palaces for a refuge.* They went up to the place that he had choſen, to *the teſtimony of Iſrael.*

Pſal. xlviii. 3. cxxii. 4.

7. He alſo manifeſted himſelf by appearing frequently to 'em. *The Angel of his preſence ſav'd 'em.* And this he did at any remarkable turn of life, when the concerns of his glory and their happineſs made it needful. Thus we read, that the *Lord went his way, as ſoon as he had left communing with Abraham.* *Jacob* takes notice that *God Almighty appear'd to him at Luz, in the land of Canaan:* This was at a time that might be call'd the dead of night, the gloomy part of life, when he left his Father's houſe, becauſe of his brother's anger. After this, upon his return, *He had power over the Angel, and prevail'd: He found him in Bethel.* So again, when the famine had ſtarv'd him out of *Canaan,* the country that was promis'd to him and his ſeed after him; at *Beerſheba,* the confines of the land, *God ſpake to Iſrael in the viſions of the night:* He ſent an Angel to fetch 'em out of *Egypt:* He guided 'em in the way, and was an adverſary to their adverſaries. This was no other than *He, who rejoic'd in the habitable parts of the earth,* and by that gave out ſome sketches of the future incarnation: It was the dawn of our more glorious day. This *Angel of the covenant whom they delighted in,* was in the laſt days to *come to his temple,* and therefore diſcover'd himſelf to 'em before-hand, that *the twelve Tribes, inſtantly ſerving God day and night,* might ſtill keep looking on, to *the great hope of Iſrael.*

Iſa. lxiii. 9. Gen. xviii. 31. xlviii. 3. Hoſ. xii. 4. Gen. xlvi. 2. Prov. viii. 31. Mal. iii. 1. Acts xxvi. 7.

8. The laſt and greateſt manifeſtation that we have of God is *in the fleſh.* What that body was by which he became viſible, and made his appearance ſo often in the Old Teſtament, is a thing undeſcrib'd; and therefore to gueſs at it, is only to wander

der in the mazes of our own folly. It's certain, this way of coming in the flesh exceeds all the rest; it answers nobler ends, is better for us, and kinder in him. *These sundry times and divers manners* in which he spake to the Fathers, make so many glorious parts in history; but his speaking to us in these last days *by his Son*, is distinguish'd from all that went before. The way of doing *That* was more suitable to our happiness and his own dignity, upon several accounts. 'Tis more familiar, and less frightful; more certain and convincing; more expressive of our union to him; more capable of working out the great atonement; more instructive in the matter of duty; it gives a greater assurance of our happiness; and in the whole, is a nobler argument of the Divine love. SERM. XIV.

1. His being manifest in the flesh exceeds all the other manifestations that he gave of himself, as it is more familiar. *Rejoice greatly*, saith the Prophet, *O daughter of Sion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy King comes unto thee; he is just, and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass.* Whatever we may think of voices and thunders, and a doctrine discharg'd in the artillery of heaven, the people who were under that dispensation did not like it. At the giving of the law the Angels attended in their places, and were distributed into their several offices: some manag'd the thunder, others shook the mountain; some gave the smoke, and others the voice. Now, tho' these were a noble testimony to the law itself, and an argument for the people to hear and fear, yet the terror it put 'em into was by no means desirable. They come to *Moses*, and beg that he would go into the mount, that they might hear no more of these mighty thundrings. Nay, so dreadful was the sight, that *Moses himself said, I exceedingly fear and quake.* And if *he* could not bear it, who had seen the Lord, Zech. ix. 9. Heb. xii. 21, 22.

SERM. XIV. and was prepar'd for a correſpondence with all that glory, well might it ſcatter a confuſion among the children of *Iſrael*.

Thus was God manifeſt then, and they might take it for *a humbling of himſelf*, to behold the things that were done among 'em; but we have his love in a more familiar way, in that he would

Gal. iv. 4. *ſend forth his Son made of a woman, and made under*
Joh. i. 14. *the law. The word was made fleſh and dwelt among*
Heb. xii. *us. We are not come to the mount that burn'd with*
18, 19. *fire, nor unto blackneſs, and darkneſs, and tempeſt, and the ſound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which they that heard entreated that the word ſhould no more*
ver. 24, *be ſpoken to 'em*, but to *Jeſus the mediator of the*
26. *new covenant, whoſe voice then ſhook the earth.*

And if it was not a God who came into that tabernacle of fleſh, and took our nature into union with himſelf, we cannot regard it with ſo much veneration as we muſt have done thoſe thunders and voices that publiſh'd the *Horeb* edition of the

Pſ. lxviii. law. He was certainly at mount *Sinai among his*
17. *thouſands of Angels*, and is it not the ſame God who took upon him our nature? if not, we are no gainers by this diſpenſation. What was there in Him more than a Prophet? His working greater miracles, giving a better account of religion, is not all, for that any other perſon might have done: nay, in each of theſe his own Diſciples exceeded him,

Joh. xiv. as he foretold they ſhould: *He that believes on me*
12. *ſhall do greater things than I do, becauſe I go to my Father.* From them the world has a more complete edition of the Goſpel than they had from him: He left many things unſaid, but the Spirit whom he

xvi. 13. would ſend ſhould *lead them into all truth.* And therefore, what was there in him, more than in them? you can put it upon no leſs than the great-

Acts vii. neſs of his Perſon. The law was given *by the diſ-*
53. *poſition of Angels*, being *ordain'd by Angels in the*
Gal. iii. 19. *hands*

hands of a Mediator, that is, *Moſes*. Our Goſpels comes with none of this ſolemnity, but with quiet preaching, *the voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths ſtrait*. Thus it begun with the miniſtry of *John the Baptiſt*, or rather, that was preliminary to it; *for this great ſalvation began to be ſpoke by the Lord Jeſus, and was confirm'd by thoſe that heard him.* SERM. XIV. Luke iii. 4. Heb. ii. 2, 3.

Now, where was the force of the Apoſtle's argument, *if the word ſpoken by Angels was ſtedfaſt, and every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience receiv'd a recompenſe of reward; how ſhall we eſcape who neglect the great ſalvation that began to be ſpoke by the Lord Jeſus?* It's apparent, he conſiders Jeſus as a much greater ſpeaker than the Angels: and it is certain nothing of that could be ſeen in his converſation, for he was much *lower than the Angels*. They who believ'd not were far from taking him for one above 'em, or giving the preference to his words more than to what was ſaid by an Angel: ſo that, if there is any concluſion at all in his argument, it muſt be drawn from an *unſeen glory* in the ſpeaker, ſomething that was not known to them that deſpis'd him, and only evident to thoſe whoſe eyes God had open'd; and ſo it prov'd: *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, but the world knew him not*, *i. e.* they knew him not as their Maker. In other reſpects they were no ſtrangers to him: they knew him to be of *Nazareth*, of a poor parentage, of a mean kindred, but they knew him not in his main character. Our Saviour obſerves both theſe, for his enemies argu'd, *We know this man whence he is; but when Chriſt comes, no man knows whence he is;* to which he anſwers, *Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am; but he that ſent me is true, whom ye know not; but I know him, for I am from him. He came to his own, and his own receiv'd him not*, *i. e.* the *Jews*. They marvell'd Joh. i. 20. Joh. vii. 27, 28, 29.

SERM. XIV. at his words, were aſtoniſh'd at his doctrine; they admir'd his miracles; but this was not receiving him: that contain'd a great deal more than believing him to be a good man, a Prophet mighty in word and deed. Now, *to them that receiv'd him, he gave power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe,* on what? *on his name,* tho' their faith might be led on by his doctrine, and by his miracles; [never man ſpake like this man; he did the works that no other could do] yet it fix'd on his unſeen character.

They believ'd *on his name,* what he was in himſelf. And what is that? *The* WORD *was made fleſh, and dwelt among us.* Others might know that as well as they, they ſaw him to be fleſh, and they knew his abode, but they were ignorant of the antecedent majeſty; and therefore thoſe believers were ennobled to look thro': *We beheld his glory (the glory of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.* Thoſe laſt words belong to the firſt, and may be conſider'd apart from the parentheſis that breaks the ſentence. He tells us that this WORD *dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.* The character fixes upon him as Mediator: with that furniture he was an inhabitant in our world; but this does not tell us *all* that he was: there's ſomething elſe that believers ſaw in him, beſides the holineſs of his Perſon, and the qualifications for his work: they ſaw HIS *glory,* and what was this? *the glory of the only begotten of the Father:* the world had never before ſuch a diſcovery of a God. God had often been *with* a perſon, but not *in* one, and therefore he is call'd *the image of the inviſible God;* the moſt familiar manifeſtation that the world can have of him. He is *the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image* or character *of his Perſon.* Upon which he ſaith to *Philip, He that has ſeen me, has ſeen the Father.*

Joh. i. 13, 14.

Heb. i. 2.

How

SERM. XIV.

How familiar was this, that he ſhould be *Immanuel*, God with us! not merely by a ſpiritual preſence, for that he *was before*, and that he *is* more eminently *now*, but he who was with us is God: this way was the moſt agreeable to our weakneſs. God's appearance us'd to be dreadful: *Jacob* makes a wonder of it, *I have ſeen God face to face, and yet my life is preſerv'd.* Gen. xxxii. 30. *Manoah* as ſoon as he ſaw the Angel of the Lord (which ſhews what ſort of an Angel he took him for) cries out with all the pain of admiration, *We ſhall ſurely die, becauſe we have ſeen God.* The manifeſtation that he makes of himſelf in the fleſh, is without all this dread: here *our eyes may ſee, and our hands may handle of the word of life*, as that Apoſtle ſaith who us'd to lie in his boſom: *For*, ſaith he, *the life was manifeſted, and we have ſeen it, and bear witneſs, and ſhew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifeſted unto us.* What he calls *the word of life* in one verſe, he calls by the name of *life* itſelf in the other, which ſhews that they both muſt be underſtood of a perſon; of Him, whom they had look'd upon, and whom their hands had handled. This eternal life was *with the Father*, as the author of eternal life, and yet he was *manifeſt to us in the fleſh:* He came into one of our tabernacles, thoſe houſes of clay whoſe foundations are in the duſt, and are cruſh'd before the moth. 1 Joh. i. 1, 2.

2. This manifeſtation of God is moſt certain and convincing. Many times they could not tell whether it was God who ſpake to 'em or no. The Prophets themſelves were frequently oblig'd to take up with the after-grounds of aſſurance, *Then I knew it was the word of the Lord.* *Elijah* ſaw a mighty earthquake, but *the Lord was not in the earthquake:* he heard a ſtrong ruſhing wind, *but the Lord was not in the wind:* he expected to have found him in both theſe; but we *are ſure that the Lord God* Jer. xxxii. 8. Zech. xi. 11. 1 Kings xix. 4.

SERM. XIV. *of Iſrael has viſited and redeem'd his people,* ἐπισκέψατο καὶ ἐποίησε λύτρωσιν, He has look'd upon 'em, and wrought out a ſalvation.

Luke i. 68.

What ſort of a body he had for the apparitions under the old Teſtament, we cannot tell; but now he is *made of a woman.* He did not take upon him a ſhadow, an airy covering, a humane figure, which he might throw off as a looſer garment, after it had ſerv'd a particular occaſion: but *he was in all things tempted as we are,* κατὰ πάντα καθ' ὁμοιότητα, according to the whole of that likeneſs that he had to his people. *Foraſmuch as children were partakers of fleſh and blood, he likewiſe himſelf* ὡσαπλησίως univerſally, entirely, was a ſharer with 'em; *for it became him in all things to be made like unto his brethren.*

Heb. iv. 15.

ii. 14, 17.

The primitive churches were guilty of an error upon this head, againſt which the Apoſtles argu'd with a particular vehemence: his divinity was not then the main queſtion, ſo much as the truth of his humanity. That he who came about their ſalvation is *the mighty God* was eaſily believ'd, becauſe it is only under thoſe notions that we conceive him equal to the deſign. But the difficulty lay in this, that an infinite nature ſhould take a finite one, that he ſhould be *a child,* live as we did, and die as we ſhall: this was the great ſtumbling-block; and therefore he is call'd *an Antichriſt who denied that Chriſt was come in* THE FLESH. Not but that they would own that he had been among 'em, there were witneſſes enough of that; but they thought he could not have the reality and truth of our nature; in oppoſition to which thoſe expreſſions were us'd, *We have look'd upon, and our hands have handled the Word of life.* There's no handling of a God, or ſeeing him, who *dwells in that light to which none can approach.* As the Word of life, he could not be the ſubject of ſuch a converſation;

verſation; but the meaning is, that He who bore this Divine character came down into a lower, and ſo *dwelt among* us. SERM. XIV.

This is not like thoſe tranſient viſions under the old Teſtament. When the Angel came the ſecond time upon *Manoah*'s prayer, and had given him inſtructions what he ſhould do to the child, and at laſt went up in the flame, it is ſaid that *the Angel of the Lord did no more appear to Manoah and his wife*. He had done with that meſſage. Theſe *haſty revelations*, that were carried on in a way of *flight*, left the people at great uncertainties; but now it is obſerv'd of the Lord Jeſus, that *he went in and out among ſt us*. Acts i. 21.

They might well ſay, *We believe, and are* SURE, *that thou art that Chriſt the Son of the living God*. Joh. vi. 69. And to this profeſſion our Lord himſelf gives his teſtimony, *I have given unto them the words that thou gaveſt me, and they have receiv'd them, and have known* SURELY *that I came out from thee, and they have believ'd that thou haſt ſent me*. Indeed this is what themſelves had told him a little before, *Now we are* SURE *that thou knoweſt all things, and needeſt not that any man ſhould ask of thee; by this we believe that thou cameſt forth from God*. In what ſenſe? as a good man, as a mighty Prophet? no, but as one that had an exiſtence with God, and the exiſtence of a God, as one that *knew all things*. Now, why ſhould they ſay that of him, when he had expreſly told 'em, that there was an hour that none of the Angels knew, no not the Son, but the Father? He plainly confeſſes a nature that was *not* omniſcient, and therefore if they did not believe he had *another* that *was*, they would never have been ſo looſe and extravagant in their zeal as to tell him, that *he knew all things*. xvii. 8. xvi. 30.

3. This manifeſtation in the fleſh, is moſt expreſſive of our union to him. We may call him

our

SERM. XIV. Pſ. lxviii. 20. *our God*, as he is the author of *ſalvation*, and as he gives us the deſires that are breathing after it, and all the preparations that relate unto it; but that he might abundantly ſhew us *how much* he is ours, he is *bone of our bone, and fleſh of our fleſh:* he becomes *the ſeed of the woman.* It was not enough that he all along deſign'd to condemn ſin, but he does it *in the fleſh*; ſo that by this means, he has all the names that ſignifie the deareſt relations. He is *our Lord and maſter*; we call him ſo, and we ſay well. We are *under the law to Chriſt.* He's our friend, our ſhepherd, he lays down his life for the ſheep. He is our Father. *His goings forth have been of old from everlaſting. Here am I*, ſaith he, *and the children whom he has given me.* But on purpoſe to ſhew us this union in all the happy forms that can be, he becomes alſo our brother, *the firſt-born among many brethren.* As the ground of an union with him in covenant, he admits us to one in nature. He did this on purpoſe to be the foundation of our hope in that promiſe, *I in them, and thou in me.* He became the Son of man, that we might be the children of God.

Rom. viii. 3. Joh. xiii. 13. 1 Cor. ix. 21. Mic. v. 2. Heb. ii. 13. Rom. viii. 29.

4. This manifeſtation in the fleſh, was for the working out of a great atonement. The Apoſtle gives that as the reaſon, why it *behov'd him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high Prieſt in things pertaining to God, making reconciliation for the ſins of the people.* This us'd to be carried on in a way that could have no other value, than as it was typical of ſomething better than itſelf; I mean, by ſacrifices and burnt-offerings: for tho' he told us, *that without ſhedding of blood there could be no remiſſion*, yet it was *impoſſible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away ſins.*

Heb. ii. 17. ix. 22. x. 4.

Now in order to anſwer what *this* could only point to, there muſt be an incarnation. Satisfacti-

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on was the τὸ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου, *the thing that the law could not do*, and this God brings about by *sending his Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh*. Sending him in thoſe ſlighter and thinner forms under the old Teſtament would be ſufficient for an inſtruction to his people, and for a reſcue from their enemies. This would do for *a captain of the Lord's hoſt*, as he calls himſelf to *Joſhua*, but it could not avail to a *propitiation*; there muſt be the ſhedding of blood for that: and therefore, ſaith he, *when ſacrifice and offering thou wouldſt have no longer, a body thou haſt prepar'd me*. That opinion of the ancients, which the Apoſtle *John* run down with ſo much warmth, that Chriſt was *not come in the fleſh*, ought to be reſiſted in all the vehemence that he us'd, becauſe it deſtroy'd the foundations. If he was not man, he could not die, and if he did not die, there was no atonement made, we are *yet in our ſins*. If there was none of this precious blood, we are ſtill unredeem'd: and tho' he is *the lion of the tribe of Judah*, he is not that *Lamb of God who takes away the ſins of the world*.

Rom. viii. 4.

Joſh. v. 25.

Heb. x. 8.

Joh. i. 29.

5. By this manifeſtation in the fleſh, he gave the beſt inſtructions in the matter of our duty. Had he never reveal'd himſelf otherwiſe than in the more glorious forms that were us'd of old, we ſhould have admir'd his Perſon, but not underſtood ſo much of his errand: he was therefore to teach us *after the manner of men*, to bear the weakneſs and prejudice of his Diſciples, and to anſwer their objections. *Job* complain'd that every admonition from God loſt its uſefulneſs by its majeſty, and therefore thinks he could have learnt better, if the terror of the Lord had not made him afraid. *Let not his fear terrifie me, then would I ſpeak, and not fear him, but it is not ſo with me: I am troubled at his preſence, when I conſider I am afraid of him; for God makes my heart ſoft, and the Almighty*

Job xxiii. 15, 16.

SERM. XIV. xxxiii. 6, 7. *Almighty troubles me:* and therefore, *Elihu* tells him, *Behold, I am according to thy wiſh, in God's ſtead: I am form'd out of the clay: behold, my terror ſhall not make thee afraid, neither ſhall my hand be heavy upon thee.*

This expreſſion of his ſhews us what ſort of a diſpenſation would be beſt, where we could have God's wiſdom deliver'd without his majeſty, as Col. ii. 9. we have from one *in whom dwells all the fulneſs of* Job xix. 25. *the Godhead bodily. Job* knew *that his Redeemer ſhould ſtand in the latter days upon the earth: he ſhall* Mic. v. 4, 5. *ſtand and feed in the ſtrength of the Lord, and in the majeſty of the name of the Lord his God. The man that is to be the peace* ſhall do this: he was to *feed* Iſa. xl. 11. *his flock like a ſhepherd, carry the lambs in his arm, take 'em in his boſom, and gently lead thoſe that are with young.* The manifeſtation of a God in the fleſh, gives the eaſieſt conveyance to all inſtructions. When he reveal'd himſelf in that cloud of thick darkneſs by which he took poſſeſſion of *Solomon*'s temple, the prieſts could not enter in to miniſter becauſe of the ſtifling glory. Tho' they admir'd ſo great a token of the Divine preſence, yet it rather kept 'em out of his ſervice than help'd 'em in it: but when God came down among us in the perſon of a Redeemer, religion was both greater *to* Joh xvii. 6 8. our minds, and ſooner *in* 'em. *I manifeſted unto them thy name, and I have given unto them the words that thou gaveſt me, and they have receiv'd 'em.*

6. This gives us the greateſt aſſurance of our happineſs, becauſe he has carried his body up with Heb. vi. 20. him to heaven: *thither Jeſus our forerunner is for us enter'd.* When, and how did he enter? In the day of his crucifixion? for that day he was with the converted thief in paradiſe; or as one that took poſſeſſion for himſelf? no, but *as a high Prieſt for ever,* with all the materials of a ſacrifice about ix 12. him: *By his own blood he enter'd into the holieſt of*

all,

all, having obtain'd eternal redemption for us. We therefore the rather look for Christ Jesus the Lord, and know that he will *change our vile bodies,* because he has now such a *glorious body,* and is *able by a mighty power to subdue all things unto himself.* SERM. XV. Phil. iii. 21.

7. This shews the goodness of God our Saviour towards men. Herein has *God commended his love towards us,* in sending his only begotten Son into the world, *that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.* This might well be call'd *glad tydings of great joy to all people, that to us is born in the city of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord.* Let the redeem'd of the Lord say so, let 'em take a part in the songs of those Angels who brought the message, and say, *Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will towards men.* Joh. iii. 16. Luke ii. 11. ver. 14.

SERMON XV.

Oct. 26. 1718.

IV. THE last thing I'm to do, according to the disposition that we have made of the words, is to shew you how this branch of the christian religion answers the noble character that's here given of it, as a *mystery of godliness.* Under this head there are two parts,

1st, That it is a mystery, and,

2dly, That it is a mystery of *godliness.*

I have already consider'd each of these, as they belong to the Gospel in general, and let you see the importance of mysteries in our religion, that they are a suitable object of faith, and indeed the glory of any revelation. *Our hearts are comforted in* Col. ii. 2.

SERM XV. *in the riches of the full assurance of understanding, and an acknowledgment of the mystery.* You have also heard how well christianity is prepar'd upon this account to form the minds of men, to direct their choice, to help on their duty, and ensure their happiness; and that without a belief of some things, that reason can neither discover nor comprehend, it is impossible that practical holiness should obtain in the
1 Tim. vi. 3 world: 'tis *a doctrine according to godliness.* I shall now lay before you those divine titles as they belong to this particular article of faith, that *God was manifest in the flesh*, and let you see both that it is a mystery, and that it is design'd to promote our duty and consolation.

1. I begin with the first of these, that it is a MYSTERY; and really there's no need to dispute it. The text is literally true, that *without controversie great is this mystery.* This is so far from being a part of the question, that it is therefore denied to be a *truth*, because it is a *mystery.* All the objections form'd against it are upon this ground, do but bring it down to the management of reason, let it be one of those things that man's wisdom teaches, and we shall have no contradiction of sinners. But as it is among *the deep things of God*, which none but the holy Ghost reveals, 'tis upon
1 Cor. ii. 14. this account that *the natural man receives it not*, neither can he know it, because it is foolishness to him.

However, I will lead you thro' a few particulars that will shew how amazing this contrivance deserves to be in the eyes of all the Saints. If God was manifest in the flesh, then the following oppositions between the two natures were reconcil'd. And how could men or Angels either imagine the way, or believe the fact, if an all-comprehending wisdom had not both contriv'd and reveal'd it? He that dwells in a *light* to which none can approach,

becomes

becomes *viſible* to the world. He who had pre- SERM. par'd his throne in the heavens lives among *men.* XV. He who is above the derivation of any being *from* a *man* is made of a *woman.* He who is *Lord* of all, takes the form of a *ſervant.* He who is eternally *holy,* appears in the likeneſs of *ſinful* fleſh. He whoſe *kingdom* rules over all, is a man of *ſorrows,* and acquainted with grief! He who is *bleſs'd* for ever, becomes a *curſe* for us: and he who is the Prince of *life* is obedient to the *death* of the croſs.

Theſe ſeveral wonders are contain'd in the manifeſtation that God made of himſelf in the fleſh: and they are all of that nature, that as our reaſon is never able to find 'em out, ſo neither ought it ever to have taken 'em in, if they had not been recommended by a divine teſtimony. They are every one of 'em incredible, and to us they appear impoſſible. As none but a God could do 'em, ſo none but a God can tell 'em. It's upon his report alone that we receiv'd 'em.

1. Is it not a myſtery that He *who dwells in that light to which none can approach,* became viſible to us? The former part of this character belongs to Chriſt, as you will ſee by the context to the verſe out of which I have taken it. The Apoſtle charges *Timothy to keep the commandment without ſpot,* 1 Tim. vi. *and unrebukeable unto the appearing of our Lord Jeſus* 15, 16. *Chriſt,* WHO *in his times ſhall ſhew who is the bleſſed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.* There's nothing ſaid of him thus far, but what agrees to the known language of the Bible. And he goes on in a deſcription of the very ſame Perſon, that *He only has immortality, dwelling in the light which none can approach unto, whom no man has ſeen, nor can ſee; to whom be glory and power everlaſting,* Amen. 'Tis under this notion that our Lord ſpeaks of the Divine Nature, as that which is

known

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known and seen by none but himself. *No man has seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declar'd him.* And again, *not that any man has seen the Father, save he that is of God, he has seen the Father.* The same inaccessible glory does he challenge to himself, that *none knows the Father but the Son, and none knows the Son but the Father.*

John i. 10. vi. 46. Mat. xi. 27.

Now, he was to make the Divine Nature, in some respects, conversible with us. Hence we read of him, that *he is the image of God.* This description is elsewhere more enlarg'd, that he is *the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature.* Thus the Apostle saith in that text that will ever contain a fulness of truth, when all the pains that men take to rob and plunder it shall prove in vain, *He is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person.* We have *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ.* This was the design of his incarnation, that God and man should again be known to one another. *Moses* begs of God, *I beseech thee shew me thy glory*; and receives this for an answer, *Thou canst not see my face*; *for no man shall see me and live.* How different is the answer that our Lord gives to *Philip*, who had desir'd the same thing, *Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us?* Christ does not tell him as it was said to *Moses*, that he is asking for a thing impossible. No, he represents his own person, as a more familiar publication of the Divine Nature than the world ever had before. *If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father, and from henceforth ye have known him, and seen him: He that has seen me has seen the Father*; *and how say'st thou then, shew us the Father? Believest thou not, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?* Who would ever imagine, that we should see, *and with eyes look upon*, and that *our hands should handle the Word of life! For the*

2 Cor. iv. 4. Col. i. 15. Heb. i. 2. 2 Cor. iv. 6. Ex. xxxiii. 18. Ver. 20. John xiv. 8. —9, 10. 1 John i. 1, 2.

life

life was manifeſted, and we have ſeen it, and bear witneſs and ſhew unto you, that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifeſt to us.

Moſes tells the children of *Iſrael*, that there was ſomething in their caſe which exceeded all the obſervation of the univerſe. *Ask now of the days that are paſt which were before thee, ſince the day that God created man upon earth, and ask from one ſide of heaven unto the other, whether there has been any ſuch thing as this great thing is, or has been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God ſpeaking out of the midſt of the fire, as thou haſt heard and live?* This he repeats to their farther aſtoniſhment, the *Lord talked with you face to face in the mount, out of the midſt of the fire:* And he puts 'em in mind of the remark that themſelves made upon this occaſion; *Ye ſaid, behold the Lord our God has ſhew'd us his glory and his greatneſs, and we have heard his voice out of the midſt of the Fire; we have ſeen this day that God does talk with man, and he lives.* But all this does not amount to ſo much as an incarnation; that the word ſhould be made fleſh. It was Chriſt who reveal'd himſelf to the *Jews* of old; He was the Angel of the Divine Preſence; 'twas *the reproach of Chriſt which Moſes eſteem'd above all the treaſures of Egypt.* 'Twas he who appear'd at *Horeb* in a flame of fire out of the midſt of the buſh; but then he was not to be approach'd to: The Lord called unto *Moſes, Draw not nigh hither, but put off thy ſhoes from thy feet.* As the Angel that went before 'em, he plac'd himſelf within a cloud, from which they were to keep their diſtance: But when the word was made fleſh, they *beheld his glory.* And what a wonder is it, that He who would not be known any otherwiſe than in theſe imperfect revelations, ſhould be *manifeſt in the fleſh?*

Deut. iv. 32, 33.

Ch. v. 4.

Ver. 24.

Heb. xi. 26.

Exod. iii. 5.

John i. 13.

2. Another thing myſterious in this doctrine is, that He who has *prepar'd his throne in the heavens*

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should dwell among men. The Word was made flesh, καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, and had a tabernacle among us; he was not only our brother, but our neighbour, *rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth.* To prepare a throne in the heavens is the glory of a God: 'Tis one of the highest conceptions we have of him; *That the heaven, even the heaven of heavens is the Lord's.* Our Saviour takes care to represent it as His place. Thus, when he speaks of the Father before the foundation of the world, he saith of himself, *I was with him, daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.* And as the Evangelist tells us, *The Word was with God, and the Word was God; the same was in the beginning with God:* He had his own seat of government and glory. This he demands upon his return, *Glorify me with the glory that I had with Thee, before the world was. The Son of man ascended where he was before.* This is what he could never lose, and therefore speaks of his presence and greatness there as a continued thing, an eternal enjoyment; and if it is not to be understood of a nature above what he appear'd in, we know not how to make sense of the words: *No man has ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven:* His ascension in our nature was not till some years after this; but what he adds in the next words brings its own interpretation along with it, *The Son of man who* IS *in heaven.* Was not this enough to confound *Nicodemus?* If it did not relate to his Divinity, the expression would puzzle us more than the account of the new birth puzzled him: For a person who was then with him in a little room to talk of being *in heaven*, might provoke him to say a second time, how can these things be?

Psal. cxv. 16.
Prov. viii. 30.
John i. 1, 2.
—xvii. 2.
vi. 62.
John iii. 13.

Now, what a wonder is it, that he who liv'd in the *high and holy place that is call'd eternity*, should *come in and go out among us!* He might have taken

Isa. lvii. 15.
Acts i. 21.

our

our nature in the ſame way that now keeps it, placed it at once in the city and temple of God, never let it come lower than it is at preſent. He might have made it from the beginning, as it now is, *a glorious Body*. But the aſtoniſhment is that he ſhould be *in the world* that was *made* by him. SERM. XV. Phil. iii. 21. John i. 10.

The Scripture has told us with what amazement the moſt eminent perſons of two religions have deliver'd themſelves upon this doctrine. The heathen could never believe it, and therefore lay it down as a principle when they ſpeak of their gods, that *their dwelling is not with fleſh*. And the *Jews* themſelves, to whom it was ſo often promis'd, found it hard to be conceiv'd. *Solomon* had a Divine direction to build a temple, and about this he had us'd all the pains, and coſt, and care that the world was capable of ſupplying: And yet when he comes to the ſolemnity of a dedication, he can ſcarce believe what he ought not to doubt of: He flies back with a recoil of wonder, *Will God in very deed dwell on the earth! behold the heaven, even the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, how much leſs this houſe that I have built?* Dan. ii. 2.

That which he found it ſo hard to apprehend becomes the report of our Goſpel. This is the great voice that we have heard out of heaven, ſaying, *Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with 'em, and they ſhall be his people, and God himſelf will be with them, and be their God.* That Chriſt is made of *the ſeed of David according to the fleſh*; nay, that he was *born in the city of David*, that there they ſhould find *a Child*; well might the ſhepherd's ſay, *Come, and let us go to Bethlehem, and ſee this* GREAT THING *that is come to paſs.* Rev. xxi. 3. Rom. i. 3. Luke ii. 2. Ver. 15.

3. Another part of the myſtery is, that he who has deriv'd no being from a *man* ſhould be born of a *woman*. The Apoſtle argues to the *Athenians* that God *needed not any thing, ſeeing that he gives to us life* Acts xvii. 25.

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life and breath, and all things. And we have an equal account of Christ Jesus, that *by him all things were fix'd,* that *he upholds all things by the word of his power*; that *in him was life, and that life was the light of men.* So that, tho' he took upon him our nature, it was not in such a descent as we have. God speaks of it as his own act, the thing that he would distinguish to the wonder of all ages. *Behold the Lord himself shall give you a sign, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and they shall call his name Immanuel.* This our Saviour mentions as a Divine contrivance; *A body hast thou prepar'd me.* And it is amazing that his title, as the Son of God, is given him upon this account as well as those that are greater. As the Angel tells the Virgin *Mary, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; and therefore that holy thing that is born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*

Col. i. 17. Heb. i. 3. John i. 4. Isa. vii. 14. Heb. x. 5. Luke i. 35.

'Tis as hard for us to conceive how he should be a man, according to this account, as it is how he should be a God. This is as great a difficulty in the *history* of the Gospel, as there can be in its *doctrines.* And therefore when it is said, that to us *a Son is born, to us a child is given*; the names that he is called by are, *Wonderful, Counsellor, everlasting Father, and mighty God.* And he may be call'd *Wonderful,* considering the manner how he is *born,* and the way in which he is *given.* They that deny his Divinity may, with as much justice, do the same by his humanity, unless that expression comes within the reach of *their* reason, which I own will be ever astonishing to *mine: Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise; whenas his mother was espoused to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.* A phrase never us'd before, since the beginning of the world, and never like to be upon any other occasion. If we must have

Isa. ix. 6. Mat. i. 18.

no

no myſteries in religion, let us begin with razing out this. If faith is to receive no more than wiſdom can explain, we may ſhut up the New Teſtament as ſoon as we have open'd it; for it will be impoſſible to get over an incomprehenſible fact that lies in the very mouth of the ſtory. SERM. XV.

4. He who was *Lord of all* takes upon him *the form of a ſervant:* This carries the wonder a little deeper. The Apoſtle took care to let *Cornelius* know this, and therefore wedges it in at the beginning of his diſcourſe: As ſoon as he had mention'd *peace by Jeſus Chriſt*, he adds, *He is Lord of all.* Acts x. 36. This he was originally, *His kingdom rules over all.* Pſal. ciii. 19. Thus the wiſe men enquir'd after him, *Where is He* Mat. ii. 2. *that is born King of the Jews.* So the Angel foretold, *He ſhall be great, and ſhall be call'd the Son of the* Luke i. 32, *Higheſt, and the Lord God ſhall give him the throne* 33. *of his Father David, and he ſhall reign over the houſe of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there ſhall be no end.* And, leſt ſome people ſhould think this title (*the Son of the Higheſt*) is not ground enough for our adoration, you read what *Zacharias*, the father of *John* the Baptiſt, ſaith at the circumciſion of his Son: *Thou child ſhalt be call'd the Prophet of* Ver 76. *the Higheſt; for thou ſhalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways.* The Angels are his *Spirits, and his miniſters are a flame of fire; but to the Son it is ſaid, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,* Heb. i. 7, 8. *and a ſceptre of righteouſneſs is the ſceptre of thy kingdom.* It was reveal'd a long while ago, that he ſhould be *the governour among the nations;* that in Pſal. xxii. 28. the days of thoſe kings who were to dwell after one another in the world, *the God of heaven would ſet* Dan. ii. 44. *up a kingdom that ſhould not be deſtroy'd.* He is call'd —ix. 25. *Meſſiah the Prince.*

But it was not *thus* that he took upon him our nature; not with a dazzle or ſhew of this dignity, but *being found in faſhion as a man, he took upon him* Phil. ii. 7, 8.

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the form of a ſervant. He made himſelf of no reputation, ἐκένωσεν ἑαυτὸν, he made himſelf vain and empty. He came with none of that fulneſs that we ſhould have expected from the mighty things
Iſa. liii. 3. that have been ſaid of him. *He grew up as a tender plant, and a root out of a dry ground.* He was
Luke ii. 51. *ſubject to his parents*, wrought with them, and is therefore call'd *the Carpenter.* He was afterwards,
Mark vi. 3. by way of ſcorn, *a ſervant of rulers, one whom man*
Iſa. xlix. 7. *deſpis'd and nations abhor'd*; nay, he was among his own diſciples *as one that ſerves*; *the Son of man came*
Luke ix. 58. *not to be miniſter'd unto, but to miniſter.* He had *not where to lay his head.* The people *miniſter'd to him*
—viii. 3. 2 Cor. viii. 9. *of their ſubſtance. Ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, how, that tho' he was rich, yet, for your ſakes, he became poor, that ye, thro' his poverty, might be made rich.*

5. He who was eternally holy came in the
Rom. viii. 3. *likeneſs of ſinful fleſh.* The devils gave him this teſtimony, *I know thee who thou art, the holy one of God.* Thus the Father bare witneſs of him, *This*
Mat. iii. 17. *is my beloved Son, in whom I am always well pleaſed.* He had no part in the defilement of our nature;
Heb. iv. 15. for *tho' he was in all points tempted as we are*, yet ſin is excepted. And therefore it is obſerv'd, that
2 Cor. v. 21. he was *made ſin for us who knew no ſin.* He did no evil, *neither was guile found in his mouth.*

And yet he muſt appear in the likeneſs, the reſemblance, of ſuch a perſon as he was not: And not only be charg'd by God with the guilt of others, but ſuppos'd by men to have a guilt of his own. His enemies could ſay to the judge, *If he was not an evil doer, we would not have brought him to thee.* The crimes that he was accus'd of were of the blackeſt nature. *Firſt*, They were angry that he
Mat. xxvii. 63. was a *Prophet*, in oppoſition to this they call'd him a *decciver. We know that God ſpake to Moſes, as for*
John ix. 29. *this fellow we know not from whence he is. Secondly*, They

They would not own him as a *prieſt:* 'Twas brought into his indictment that he ſaid, *Deſtroy this temple, and I will build it in three days.* 'Twas ſtill more provoking, *Thirdly*, that he made himſelf a *King;* which title they perverted with a downright falſhood, ſaying, upon this ſcore, that he forbid to give tribute to *Ceſar:* And they puſh'd this with a confidence that ſhew'd 'em to be impenetrable: *If thou let this man go, thou art not Ceſar's friend; for whoever makes himſelf a king is an enemy to Ceſar.* But, *Fourthly*, the heavieſt accuſation of all was charging him with blaſphemy; for this they ſton'd him, becauſe that he being a man, made himſelf *God*; that he ſaid, *God was his Father*, THEREBY *making himſelf equal with God.* SERM. XV. Joh. xix. 12.

Thus they underſtood the phraſe, and he lets 'em go on in their notion. Another expoſition of the word would have been a plea for the perſon: and they inſiſt upon it, *We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, becauſe he call'd himſelf the Son of God.* Is not here a wonder, that the holy child Jeſus ſhould give way to all this reproach, and *endure the contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf!* But thus it muſt be, otherwiſe how could the Scriptures have been fulfill'd? Heb. xii. 3.

6. He whoſe kingdom rules over all, is *a man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief:* Angels admire him, and yet he is *deſpis'd and rejected of men; they hid their faces from him; his own receiv'd him not.* And ſuch an uſage as this was needful, in order to his bearing our griefs, and carrying our ſorrows, that the *chaſtiſement of our peace might be upon him, and by his ſtripes we might be healed.* Had the princes of this world known him, *they would not have crucify'd the Lord of glory.* Inſtead of that, they would have *kiſs'd the Son* leſt he ſhould be angry: *Kings would have ſhut their mouths at him.* The Iſa. liii. 3. Joh. i. 11. 1 Cor. ii. 8. Iſa. lii. 15.

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Jews would have run to him, as the great hope of their fathers, and *the glory of Israel.*

Luke ii. 32. Acts iii. 13, 14.

But his lot was the reverse to these honours: they *denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determin'd to let him go: They denied the holy and just one, and desir'd a murderer to be granted to 'em.* His name was grown so scandalous among 'em, that he becomes the jest of the multitude, who a little before had admir'd his miracles, and attended his public entry into *Jerusalem.* They banter'd all his offices; his prophetical, by throwing a cloth over his face, and then striking him with scorn, *Prophecy, O Christ, who it is that smote thee*; His kingly office, by platting a crown of thorns, putting it on his head, and bowing the knee before him, nay, by inscribing in the capital letters of three languages upon his cross, *This is Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews*; And his priestly office is so much their contempt, that they think it *expedient that he should die for the people*; not in the sense that he design'd, but only as a political Sacrifice. The very thieves that were crucified with him *cast the same in his teeth: He sav'd others, let him save himself.* Now, he had as much the disposal of his reputation, as he had of his life. As no man could take that away, but he had *power to lay it down, and power to take it again,* so he could as easily have broke his way thro' the cloud, and caused light to shine out of darkness. Instead of making himself of no reputation, he could have put on the other characters, as one *fairer than the sons of men, the chiefest among ten thousands,* altogether lovely, and *the desire of all nations.*

Joh. x. 18.

Ps. xlv. 3. Cant. v. 10, 16. Hag. ii. 7.

Now and then he scatter'd a little of this glory among the rebellious, by which he took off the rugged surface that the priests had laid on. The soldiers went to take him, but instead of returning with

with him as their captive, they confeſs themſelves to be his: *Never man ſpake like this man.* As he ſat in a ſynagogue at *Galilee, the eyes* of the whole aſſembly were fix'd upon him, *wondring at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth.* This account does not ſuppoſe 'em converts, but only that their better paſſions were touch'd and ſet a boiling. His brethren were amaz'd, that when he had ſo much reputation within reach, he had ſo little in poſſeſſion: *Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy Diſciples may ſee the works that thou doſt: for there is no man that does any thing in ſecret, and he himſelf ſeeks to be known openly: if thou do theſe things, ſhew thyſelf to the world.* But this project, inſtead of flowing from their faith, was an argument of their unbelief, as the hiſtorian tells us, for *neither did his brethren believe on him.* And when he went up, *it was not openly, but as it were, in ſecret.* What a myſtery is this, that he who could have commanded the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of 'em, without bowing to Satan, ſhould *find no faith in the earth?*

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Joh. vii. 46. Luke iv. 20, 22. Joh. vii. 3, 4.

7. 'Tis another myſtery, that He who is *bleſs'd* for ever, ſhould become a *curſe for his people.* Theſe are each of 'em the language of Scripture, unimprov'd and undiſguis'd. The Apoſtle diſtinguiſhes between the nature that he appear'd in, and that which was principal and antecedent. He ſaith, that *of the Jews, as concerning the fleſh, Chriſt came*; and therefore he muſt be conſider'd ſome way or other as abſtracted from this fleſh, as he is in himſelf, and that is *God over all bleſſed for ever.* Of him we read, that he is *made under the law,* and what is that? The ſame Apoſtle has laid down this maxim without any exception, that *as many as are under the law, are under the curſe*; and thus *Chriſt was made a curſe for us.* And leſt you ſhould have any doubt about this, he ſhews us, that he became

Rom. ix. 5. Gal. iii. 10, 13.

SERM. XV. became so in a ceremonial or a judicial sense, in the language of that law that was peculiar to the *Jews*, among whom God had said, *Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.*

He who was daily God's delight, comes to be his abhorrence: *The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all: it pleas'd the Father to bruise him, and put him to grief:* not for any vileness in his person, or any provocation in his behaviour, but *he suffer'd the just, for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. For the transgression of my people he was stricken.* God set him *forth to be a propitiation for our sins thro' faith in his blood:* and what a mystery is this! that *the chastisement of our peace should be upon him!* The *Jews* cried out, *How can this man give us his flesh to eat?* 'Tis as strange that it should be a sacrifice, as that it should be an entertainment, and yet without this there could be no remission. CHRIST *was offer'd to bear the sins of many:* he has appear'd in these last days *to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

Isa. liii. 6, 20. 1 Pet. iii. 18. Rom. iii. 25. Joh. vi. 52. Heb. ix. 28.

You know, this is so much a mystery, that the rage which men direct against the divinity of our Lord, usually falls as heavy upon the satisfaction that he has made. As if people were resolv'd to go thro' the whole roll of those dreadful characters; that as they have *trodden under foot the Son of God, i. e.* in his Person; so they will *count the blood of the covenant an unholy* or common thing, and *do despite to the Spirit of grace.* But take away the Divinity of our Saviour, and we are left to seek in our reverence: take away his atonement, and we are struck off from our only hope. If he does not live for ever, we have no advocate: and if he did not die for us, we have no plea. It's from the cross, and the sacrifice upon it, that we *fill our mouths with arguments. We have boldness to enter into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living*

x. 29. Job xxiii. 4. Heb. x. 19, 20.

ing way that he has conſecrated for us thro' the vail, that is to ſay, his fleſh. SERM. XVI.

8. 'Tis another part of this myſtery, that the Prince of life ſhould be obedient to *the death of the croſs*. Any other way of ſuffering had been more honourable; but it is mention'd as an extreme of duty, the fartheſt point to which it could go, that he became *obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs*. The Apoſtle does not forget this aggravation of his enemies malice, *The God of our fathers rais'd up Jeſus whom ye ſlew and hanged on a tree.* Hoſ. v. 30. And it is brought in as an evidence how powerful a joy was ſet before him, that he *endur'd the croſs, and deſpis'd the ſhame.* Heb. xii. 2. And a ſhame it was in the language of their law, for, *he that is hang'd is accurſed of God.* Dan. xxi. 23. Behold and wonder! might he not ſay as the church does, *See, O Lord, and conſider, for I am become vile!* The Apoſtle, who had us'd it as an argument againſt the *Jews*, keeps to the ſame remark: *His own ſelf bare our ſins in his own body on the tree.* 1 Pet. ii. 24. All theſe myſteries are comprehended in God's being manifeſt in the fleſh.

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Nov. 9. 1718.

II. THIS is a myſtery of GODLINESS, and has a happy influence upon all practical religion. People are the better for believing it. Under this head I would deſire your attention to the following particulars: That this doctrine is

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a great argument for our duty to God; it declares the value we have for his revelation; it is the chief ground of our hope; it is apparently the concern of good men; there are no practical inconveniences attending it; and all must own, it is a thing very desirable, and to be wish'd for.

1. This doctrine is a great argument of our duty to God. Tho' he pleads for worship from the title of Creator, *We bow down before the Lord our Maker, because we are the work of his hand, and the sheep of his pasture*, yet the more moving persuasion is, that *we are not our own, but bought with a price, and* therefore *should glorifie God in our bodies and spirits, which are God's.* The blood of Christ, who *thro' the eternal Spirit offer'd himself without spot to God, shall purge our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God.* The dignity of that Person who was manifest in the flesh, gives a value to all his commands: *His name is as oyntment pour'd forth, and therefore do the upright love him. This love of Christ constrains us*, συνέχει ἡμᾶς, we are drawn to it, and by it, as with a convulsive power.

Psal. xcv. 6.

1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

Heb. ix. 14.

Cant. i. 3.

2 Cor. v. 14.

The light of nature gives only a company of cold and heartless admonitions: it makes discoveries, but it makes no impressions. But *the grace of God*, the doctrine that he has publish'd, and by which he is reveal'd as a God, *teaches to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world.* It has been indeed an old objection against Christianity, that by setting forth one to be a propitiation for our sins, it took off the care of men about their own duty. This is what the *Papists* reviv'd at the time of the reformation, that throwing away of merit was the impairing of religion: but that pretence had a sort of universal answer not only from the learning of ministers, but from the lives of people; their humility, their zeal, their abounding

Tit. ii. 11, 12.

in the work of the Lord has roll'd away the reproach, and been a viſible argument, that the doctrine of free grace is a *doctrine of godlineſs*. SERM. XVI.

2. The belief of God's being manifeſt in the fleſh, is rais'd upon our value for the revelation he has given us: and denying it carries the moſt dangerous concluſion againſt the beſt diſpenſation that ever a people were under: *He that believes not the record that God has given of his Son, makes God a lyar.* We take it for granted, that the moſt heavenly rules of worſhip are contain'd in the Bible: that this is *given by inſpiration of God*, as he deliver'd it by thoſe holy men *who were mov'd by the Holy Ghoſt.* 1 Joh. v. 20.

Now, it's only upon the credit of this book, that we receive the things *that man's wiſdom teaches not.* Had all the writings in the world told us, that the divine nature would unite itſelf with the humane, the imagination muſt have been wild and daring: 'tis a thing that we could not receive, but upon the witneſs of God himſelf: and the only reaſon upon which we own it is, becauſe he has ſaid it in whom there is no darkneſs at all. We ſpeak wiſdom among *them that are perfect; howbeit, not the wiſdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world that come to nought: but we ſpeak the wiſdom of God in a myſtery, even the wiſdom which God ordain'd before the world unto our glory.* 1 Cor. ii. 13.

We find by experience, that the denial of this doctrine does *eat as a canker: evil men and ſeducers wax worſe and worſe.* From doubting about one particular article, they go on to deny all myſteries in general: *The natural man receives not the things of the ſpirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs to him, neither can he know 'em.* The ground of doing this is the mighty opinion we have of humane reaſon, as if nothing ſhould be admitted that does not bow to that. And it is impoſſible to indulge 2 Tim. iii. 13.

that

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that notion without bearing very hard upon the revelation that God has given: for, if reason is the supreme judge, a revelation is needless; people may do without it. And thus revelation must be degraded, and brought down to something beneath itself. If God at any time reveals himself, it must be about those matters that we could not otherwise have known: for if reason could have discover'd 'em, there had been no need of this new light.

Now, if that is laid down beforehand, that we will receive nothing even from God himself, but what we can comprehend, it supersedes all the business and design of a revelation: 'tis declaring against it. If the doctrines of the Bible are to be valu'd by their consistence with the light of nature, they might all have been spar'd: the Holy Ghost had no need to raise up Prophets, and inspire Apostles; because they tell us no more than what we either could have known without 'em, or if we could not, they are for that reason to be rejected: and indeed this consequence that I am speaking of, is no more than what people make haste into. The very notion of a book from God runs low; and when once you've got into a contempt of that, farewel religion: for you must then conclude, that God has given us no rules about the way of our approach to him, but that he continues to

Acts xiv. 16. *suffer all nations to go on in their own ways.*

If there is no revelation, there can be no method of worship, but what every one's fancy leads him to; and if there's no worship, we shall live as without a God in the world. Thus do the principles of natural religion unravel, when men have wounded that which is reveal'd: they know

2 Tim. ii. 16. not where to stop: *These profane and vain bablings increase unto more ungodliness.* Our faith in this doctrine, that God was manifest in the flesh, takes into it the whole scheme of duty. We believe it, because

becauſe it is the word of a God *who cannot lye:* and in that we go upon this opinion, that he has given us a perfect rule, a complete edition of his mind and will, and has brought in *the better hope by which we now draw nigh unto him.* SERM. XVI. Heb. vii. 19.

3. This doctrine is the chief ground of our hope, and without that, I'm ſure, there can be no religion: *He that comes unto God, muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.* The devils, and they that dwell with 'em in the chains of darkneſs, know the former of theſe: they believe there is one God: *they believe it, and tremble;* but their eyes are ſhut from all hope of an acceptance with him. They have no expectation to pleaſe him with the gloomy homage of that world: it's deſpair that keeps 'em ſilent from his praiſe, and makes 'em rebellious in every thought about him: but the *hope that is laid up for us in heaven brings forth fruit. He that has this hope in him, purifies himſelf even as he is pure.* That which makes us *ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord,* is becauſe *we know our labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.* Heb. xi. 6. Jam. ii. 19. Col. i. 8. 1 Joh. iii. 3. 1 Cor. xv. 58.

Chriſtianity ſets our practice in another light than any thing elſe can do. When a Heathen has done his utmoſt, how can he tell whether God will accept him or no? He muſt know, that the beſt of his actions are no more than duty: they make no atonement for ſin. He ſees God is juſt in the retributions of his providence, and what ground is there to ſuppoſe, he will not be ſo in the world of ſpirits? And if that ſhould happen, where muſt a man of the brighteſt character appear? *In his ſight ſhall no fleſh living be juſtified.* They knew that mere duty procur'd no pardon, and therefore ran to ſacrifices as their refuge. And the more a man's conſcience was awaken'd, the greater barbarities did he uſe to make it eaſie, giving Pſ. cxliii. 2.

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ing *his first-born for his transgression, the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul.* Christianity is the only religion that tells us what is become of our sins, that they are *laid on him who knew no sin.* Without this there could be *no hope*; and it is that which oyls the wheels, and makes us like *the chariots of a willing people.*

Mic. vi. 7.

Cant. vi. 12.

4. This doctrine is apparently the concern of good men, such as *work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.* I don't speak now of the concern that the learned part of the world will maintain, for the opinions they have read, study'd, and profess'd; but it is of more weight with me, what the humble christian saith, whose religion runs all into practice, who feels what he thinks, and does what he feels. When such a one comes to God by Jesus Christ, who is *the way of truth and the life,* he uses to refresh his soul with this doctrine, that *the Mediator between God and man* is equal to both parties: that as he thought it no shame to be equal with man, he thought it *no robbery to be equal with God.* That he is *the daysman between us, who lays his hand upon us both,* which is an act of umpirage, and can never be done by an inferior.

Job ix. 33.

If I tell the serious christian that his Saviour is less than the Father; nay, that he is *lower than the Angels,* he rejoices in it, and knows this was for *the suffering of death.* But should I go on and tell him, that he is *not God,* that he is in no respect equal to the justice which we have offended, the holiness which we have dishonour'd, and the mercy to which we must be reconcil'd, the man's thunder-struck: not so much because he has thought wrong for a great while, but because he knows not how to direct his faith, or which way to turn his hope. He's unhing'd for practice. The question is not, "What have I been *thinking,* but what

Heb. ii. 9.

" have I been *doing* all this while! I have wor- SERM.
" ſhip'd him who is not infinite; I have depended XVI.
" on him who is not omnipotent; I have run to
" an everlaſting righteouſneſs which never had an
" everlaſting author: my ſoul has been drawn off
" from the only living and true God, and has
" plac'd its confidence in him who is no more
" than a creature." The horror of ſuch an argument will be equal to the concern that a perſon has about his ſoul: the more he is in earneſt for ſalvation, the more will he be terrified to have any doubts about the divine perfections of that *only name* that's given under heaven among men.

But on the other hand, people who heed no worſhip, who *find their pleaſure on God's holy day*, who take his name in vain, are watching over the controverſie, as an eagle over a carcaſs: Theſe long to have *the foundations deſtroy'd*, that there may be Pſ. xi. 3.
no difference both in time and eternity between the righteous and the wicked, *him that ſwears, and him that fears an oath.* Men are pleas'd to ſee a text in danger of loſing either its reputation or its meaning by a criticiſm; not for a love of the truth, but to gratifie their contempt of the whole Bible. They will quarrel with the myſteries of the Goſpel, that they may be eaſie under the breaches of the law.

'Tis plain that the arguments againſt the Divinity of Chriſt are admir'd in a way that ſome of the authors, I hope, never deſign'd they ſhould be. They have this viſible effect, to *make the heart of the righteous ſad*, to ſtrike off the believer from his main hope, and *to ſtrengthen the hands of the wicked*, to encourage the breaking of God's ſabbaths, the ridiculing of his ordinances, the profaning of his name, and the neglect of his worſhip. It's eaſie to ſee to which ſide of the queſtion the ſwearer and the drunkard do incline, and how the *religion that*

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is pure and undefil'd before God and our Father will determine. We may soon know what the Spirit of grace, who mortifies the deeds of the body within us, will persuade us to believe: *If any man does the will of God, he shall know the doctrine.* If that's a rule, we shall be able to tell how the cause will issue. You may easily perceive which is the opinion that leads on prayer, and a serious hearing of the word; what's the devout notion, the doctrine that brings us into the presence of God, and what puts the faith of a christian more upon a certainty.

Joh. vii. 17.

In one way of talking, a good man knows not what he's doing; he comes to a God, and no God; he is in a misgiving way of adoration; he does worship, and yet he does not: the Scripture has call'd it worship, but he dashes it with a distinction: he talks of a Being who is eternal, and yet had a beginning: of one that is equal with the Father, and yet *not self-existent:* of an infinite Majesty deriv'd from another, to whom he must be infinitely unequal, for there is no medium between a God and a creature. He that is made cannot be God, but must be one of us; and tho' he has a greater glory than our nature, yet it must be infinitely lower than the Divine. Into such a hovering uncertain way will this opinion throw us; and those fluctuating thoughts will confound our prayer as much as our meditation: we shall be divided in ourselves, afraid that faith should give a Mediator too little glory, which may be ruinous to us, or give him too much, which may be idolatry in the sight of God.

Upon this you will find that men come to *restrain prayer;* 'tis a notion that takes 'em off their knees: if they are careless, they *will not* pray, and if they are thoughtful, they *dare not*; for those nice turns of language of a God by creation, or

by office, or by eternal emanations, are what we can better paſs upon the world, than upon our own conſcience. When we come to worſhip, we muſt *know in whom we have believ'd.* Theſe hard words may do to talk with, but they will not do to pray with. The terms of our new doctrine are no more in the Bible than thoſe of the old creeds, and will not ſound very well in prayer. SERM. XVI.

5. There's no practical inconvenience in believing that God was manifeſt in the fleſh; it does no harm to our ſerioufneſs in any one article of piety or comfort; it does not alienate a man from the life of God, or make him *forſake thoſe aſſemblies* that ſhould be continued becauſe of a day that's approaching: there's nothing irreligious to be concluded from it. If any one ſaith, that this is believing what is unaccountable to human reaſon, the chriſtian confeſſes it, and at leaſt does as much good *with* a myſtery in his head, as another does *without* one. If it's argu'd, that he worſhips three Gods, he denies it both in language and in fact.

He avows every conſequence that men pretend to plead for by their other ſchemes, as the unity of the Divine Nature, the ſimplicity and ſupremacy of God. Theſe doctrines are ſacred to him, and he profeſſes nothing which he will allow to be inconſiſtent with 'em. If men are pleas'd to call theſe contradictions, we cannot help it. 'Tis own'd that we never could, and never ought to have believ'd 'em, had they not been given us in Scripture; and therefore, if there's any overdoing in this caſe, it is only in the profound deference that we pay to the wiſdom and truth of God: that we will receive what reaſon cannot comprehend, becauſe he has told us ſo. Now, it is plain, this does no harm; it feeds duty in our lives, it inſpires hope at our death. 'Tis a doc-

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trine that makes us live with devotion, and die with comfort.

6. 'Tis certainly a thing very deſirable, and to be wiſh'd for, that he who was manifeſt in the fleſh, ſhould be God. Dr. *Clark* perſues this argument againſt the Atheiſts, in his Sermons at Mr. *Boyle*'s Lecture. "They muſt of neceſſity "own, ſaith he, that ſuppoſing it cannot be prov'd "to be true, that at leaſt it is a thing very deſira- "ble, and which any wiſe man would wiſh to be "true, for the great benefit and happineſs of man, "that there was a God, an intelligent, and wiſe, "a juſt and good being to govern the world." And when he has drawn out this reaſon the length of three pages, he ſhuts it up in theſe words, "Since they are unavoidably oblig'd to confeſs "that 'tis a thing very deſirable, there ſhould be a "God, they muſt of neceſſity be very willing, "nay, deſire it above all things, to be convinc'd "that their preſent opinion is an error." What he pleads for the great principle of natural religion, we may bring over to the caſe of revelation. 'Tis certain, that if he who came down among us is a God, our ſalvation is abundantly better than if he is not; becauſe, from hence we have a nobler inſtance of his love, a greater proof of the ſatiſfaction he made, and a ſurer ground for our dependence upon him.

1. 'Twill be eaſily own'd, that for a God to be manifeſt in the fleſh, is infinitely more kind and condeſcending than for the higheſt creature that ever was form'd. For him to come into the world, of whom it is ſaid, that *the world was made by him*, gives a greater luſtre to the deſign, than if as many Angels had come down upon earth, as there are Saints that go up to heaven: for ſtill all this while, it had been only one creature dying for another. We take our eſtimate of that love that fill'd

fill'd the action, from the diſtance of him that per- SERM. XVI.
form'd it, and therefore it muſt be infinitely more for God to do it, than if all the univerſe ſhould conſpire and agree upon the favour.

2. In this we have a greater proof of the ſatiſfaction that he has made. If his dying procur'd our pardon, that was not owing merely to the extremity of the ſorrows, but to the dignity of the ſufferer, *he did by himſelf purge away our ſins.* An infinite nature was offended, and if there's any atonement to be made, it muſt be equal to the juſtice that calls for it. A life of three and thirty years, and a death of three or four hours, could never balance the eternal miſery of ſo many thouſands as are ſav'd by it, if the chief conſideration was not had of the Perſon that endur'd 'em. Heb. i. 3.

Had an Angel died for us, it had been *the juſt for the unjuſt*, a higher nature for a lower; but as the deſign of that death was to *bring in an everlaſting righteouſneſs*, our very reaſon tells us ſuch a ſacrifice would not do, that it could not come up to the demands of eternal juſtice; it would have fallen ſhort of the deſign. And thus uncertain muſt a poor chriſtian be left in the chief concern of his hope. He now expects that God will be *gracious, becauſe he has found a ranſom. Chriſt Jeſus gave himſelf a ranſom for many, to be teſtified in due time.* Job xxxiii. 24. 1 Tim. ii. 6.

Now, the queſtion is, whether this would do? that his ſufferings were as ſevere as they could be, is plain, but were they meritorious? Admit but into the conſideration, that he who died was a God, and the difficulty is over, becauſe an infinite nature muſt do every thing with an infinite value. If the *ſword of God was directed againſt his fellow*, if he who took upon him *the form of a ſervant, thought it no robbery to be equal with God*, then he brought all the merit we could wiſh into his *obedience to death, even the death of the croſs.* And the Zech. xiii. 7.

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blood of such a one *cleanseth us from all sin:* so that, you see allowing him to be God, answers all the
1 Joh. i. 7. scruples of unbelief; it sets our faith clear of many an incumbrance; we have more peace and joy in believing. And if by this we *receive the atone-*
Rom. v. 2. *ment, we have access by faith into the grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

3. In this doctrine we have a better ground for our dependence upon him. *There is no other name*
Heb. xii. 2. *given under heaven: we look to him as the author and finisher of our faith,* and the time is coming when
Acts vii. 59. we shall say, *Lord Jesus receive my spirit.* Now, it is a great article in our comfort, to *know in whom*
2 Tim. i. 12. *we believe, that he is able to keep what we have committed to him against that day.*

" The best and noblest of creatures can do a " great deal, but can they do enough? Is there " not something that my soul wants in the mat- " ters of religion and eternity, that lies out of " their reach? I'm sure, it was the effect of Om- " nipotence that I had faith at first: and what " must it be that will take care of this noble " creation, and lift it over to glory? Mine eye " is upon Jesus; if he is God, that answers all " my questions at once, because *to God all things* " *are possible:* if he is not, I shall never be satisfy'd, " that he *may not* prove too weak for my depen- " dence; for there are some things that no crea- " ture can do, and how know I but one of 'em " may be the securing of my happiness? there- " fore denying his Divinity leaves me uncertain. " He *may* be sufficient as a creature, but I'm not " sure that *he is.* Angels can carry my soul into " *Abraham*'s bosom, but I dare not rely upon them " to make me perfect in holiness, and finish the " divine image upon me in a moment: nay, I can " hardly trust myself for this work in any lower " hands than those of a God: and therefore, if

" Christ

" Chriſt is to be *the finiſher of this faith*, I cannot SERM.
" be ſo poſitive, and have that *confidence of hope* XVI.
" *which will be ſtedfaſt to the end*, if he is not the
" mighty God, and the everlaſting Father, as well Iſa. ix. 7.
" as the Prince of peace. 'Tis *becauſe he continues* Heb. vii.
" *for ever, that he has an unchangeable prieſthood*, 24, 25.
" *and is therefore able to ſave to the uttermoſt.*

Thus have I conſider'd this copious article of the chriſtian faith, as it is a myſtery, and as it is a myſtery of godlineſs. The APPLICATION ſhall be only in two particulars.

1. Hence we ſee it's quite wrong to pretend any explication of this doctrine, becauſe that's the way to deſtroy all the *myſtery*. There are two glories in the article: *Firſt*, that it is true; and *Secondly*, that it's too great for the comprehenſion of human reaſon: and I'm ſure it is no ſervice to the former, if we are ſtriving to lay aſide the latter. The moment that any people can find out a way for *the natural man to receive it*, it's no longer what my text has call'd it; they are but *darkening counſel by words without knowledge*; *uttering* Job
what they underſtand not, things too wonderful which xxxviii. 2.
they know not. —xlii. 3.

Tho' many have thus troubled us with words, and confounded us with ſimilitudes, yet we find it will not do: they have only arm'd the hereſies which they ought to have deſtroy'd: and, if it was as eaſie to batter down the faith, as it is to expoſe an illuſtration, there had been an end of the doctrine long before this time. The reaſon why it has yet a ſtanding in the church, is becauſe it yet continues a myſtery, as it is deliver'd in *the word of God which abides for ever*; for we may ſay of every thing that man reckons his *glory*, *that it fades away*. *This way* of many of the ancients *was their folly*, and it is but folly in an uninterrupted ſucceſſion for *their poſterity to approve their ſayings*.

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I'll give you an inſtance how unhappy the primitive church has been in collecting the doctrine from that which is commonly call'd *the Apoſtle's Creed.* If ſome have ſo little modeſty as to give it that name, 'tis pity we have ſo little zeal as to allow it. 'Tis deficient of the main principles of our religion, 'tis redundant in matters of leſs importance, and it's confus'd in the method of laying 'em together. There's nothing of the great doctrine of our faith, the Three that bear record in heaven. To ſay that believing in the Son, and in the Holy Ghoſt, expreſſes their equality with the Father, is wrong, for we are ſaid as much to believe *in the catholic church.* There's nothing of the atonement that Chriſt made, but only an hiſtorical account of his death; and that ſo indiſtinct, that I know not what difference to make between his *ſuffering* under *Pontius Pilate*, and his being *crucified* and *dying*. 'Twill be hard to deliver theſe expreſſions from the charge of a *vain repetition.* There ſeems to be a deſign in all this, to tell the ſtory in a partial way, and leave the name of *Pilate* the governor as moſt abominable in the Creed, tho' that of *Caiaphas* the High-prieſt was ſo in the Bible; but here is nothing in all this to tell us what he *died for.* That article of the forgiveneſs of ſins is plac'd under the head of the Holy Ghoſt (from whom we have our ſanctification, but not our juſtification) and ſtands apart from thoſe ſufferings out of which it riſes: and then his incarnation is mention'd with ſuch a blunder, that all languages ought to be aſham'd of it. It was ſaid to the Virgin *Mary*, THOU ſhalt conceive and bear a Son; and that word is always applied to *Her.* But to have the act of conception attributed to the *Holy Ghoſt*, is ſuch a ſolæciſm as no antiquity can protect, and no later times ought to allow.

How

How vain has it been to promote this doctrine by ways that God never appointed? What little arts are us'd to ſhew our orthodoxy; ſuch as bowing at the name of Jeſus, ſtanding up at the *Gloria Patri*, tagging that to the end of every Pſalm, ſharing out a creed between two parts of a congregation, appointing a *Trinity Sunday*, with ſome other ſhifts of the like nature? Have we found theſe ſufficient barriers againſt hereſie? Does the Deity of Chriſt appear the brighter for 'em? or, have they not rather prov'd a ſnare to wiſe men, and a bawble to fools? I verily believe God has ſuffer'd this truth to be run down with learning and ſcorn, on purpoſe to ſhew us the vanity of truſting to human ramparts. If the Bible will not ſupport the doctrine, let it fall. SERM. XVI.

2. If it is a myſtery, there's no knowing it without the help of the holy Spirit: *He ſearches all things; yea, the deep things of God. God reveals 'em to us by his Spirit*; and from him we have not only the matter but the language. We ſpeak of 'em not *in the words that man's wiſdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghoſt teaches, comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual.* Is it any wonder, that they who have barter'd away all the operations of the Spirit in prayer, and every other act of religion, ſhould live to ſee his Divinity denied? But be you earneſt for this enlightening: ſtudy the Scriptures, and call down his aſſiſtance, who can *lead you into all truth;* for that God who was manifeſt in the fleſh, is *juſtified in the Spirit.* 1 Cor. ii. 10. 13.

SERMON

Dec. 7. 1718.

SERMON XVII.

1 TIM. III. 16.

——*Justified in the Spirit.*

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THE first great article in the Christian Faith is, that *God was manifest in the flesh*; that he became our companion, in order to be our sacrifice: and the second is like unto it, that *he is justified in the Spirit: On these two hang all the Law and the Prophets.* You have in them the substance of that revelation that spreads a glory quite thro' the Bible. The whole Gospel, in all the editions that the world has of it, is compriz'd in *the record that God has given of his Son.*

1 John v. 10.

I have gone thro' the former of these, in which it was my fix'd purpose to lay before you, not the fancies of men, whether learned or foolish, whether antient or modern, but the plain doctrine of the Scripture in its own language, *in words that the Holy Ghost teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.* This is the safest way for me to speak, and

1 Cor. ii. 13.

the

the most profitable for you to receive, that *your faith* SERM. *may not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of* XVII. *God.* I shall, in the same method, apply myself to the consideration of this other branch, that the God who was manifest in the flesh was *justified in the Spirit.* There is in the words a twofold antithesis, or distinction from what went before. Ver. 5.

The FIRST is in the *nature* or kind of the revelation; in the flesh he was *manifest*, in the Spirit he is *justified.* The former does not carry the discovery far enough for his whole glory; many saw *That* who were strangers to the latter. That *manifestation* was an humbling of him, a making him of no reputation, shewing him in the form of a servant. But when he is said to be *justified*, all that reproach is roll'd away. He is defended, approv'd of, and set forth in his proper greatness.

SECONDLY, The other distinction here is about the *manner* of the discovery: He was manifest *in the flesh*, he is justified *in the Spirit:* which may be understood these three ways: 1st, That the seat of this justification is the spirit or soul of man. 2dly, That the nature of it is all inward and spiritual. 3dly, That the author of it is no other than the Spirit of God. The last of these is the chief and proper sense of the word, but the first and second are so far from being opposite to it, that they are comprehended in it. For what the *Spirit* of God does in a way of testimony to the great Redeemer, is deliver'd to spiritual receivers, and convey'd with a spiritual evidence.

1. He was justified in the Spirit, *i. e.* The *seat* of this justification, the place where it is fix'd, is the soul of man. That he was *manifest* in the flesh, we could *see with our* eyes; our hands might have *handled the word of life.* Friends and enemies, good and bad believe it, and infidels came within the 1 John i. 1.

reach

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reach of this evidence. As he tells the Jews, *Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am.* But when he is *juſtified, that* lies all within; there the mind, the conſcience, the affections take in the argument. The *manifeſtation* here ſpoke of is ſeeing, but this *juſtification* is feeling: As the Apoſtle ſaith, he *reveal'd his Son in me.* He was reveal'd *to* him in a light above the brightneſs of the Sun at noon-day: He ſunk, and fell under the confuſion of that glory: But beſides that, there's a report made to his ſoul: He is reveal'd in him.

John vii. 28.

Gal. i. 16.

And this is the great work of the holy Spirit; the thing that he has in charge: not only to make us acquainted with the ſtory, which we have heard with our ears; not merely that we may *moſt ſurely believe* the matters that were made known to us *by thoſe that were miniſters and eye-witneſſes of the Word,* but we are to *receive the love of the truth, and ſo to be ſaved.* Chriſt muſt *dwell in our hearts by faith.* Indeed religion fills and feeds the life; it guides our practice, and ſupplies our duties, but the root of it is in the ſoul. The *Jews* would needs know *when* the kingdom of God came: Our Saviour baffles the queſtion at the ſame time that he anſwers it; *The kingdom of God,* ſaith he, *comes not with obſervation:* 'Tis not a matter to be ſtar'd at, but it lies *within you*; if you have it, it's there. *Chriſt is in you the hope of glory.* This then is one interpretation of the words; that tho' God was manifeſt in the fleſh, to be ſeen of all men, yet he is *juſtified in the Spirit:* His throne is eſtabliſh'd, and his character maintain'd in the ſouls of believers. They *are the temple of the living God, as God has ſaid, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people.*

Luke i. 2.

2 Theſ. ii. 10.

Eph. iii. 17.

Luke xvii. 20.

Col. i. 27.

2 Cor. vi. 16.

2. The *nature* of this juſtification is all ſpiritual: As it is deliver'd to the mind and conſcience, ſo it impreſſes theſe in a way ſuitable to the ſpirit of man.

man. His manifestation was *in the flesh*, by miracles, signs and wonders to shew his power; by meekness, humility, and patience to shew his purity; by trouble, shame, and death to declare his merit: These were external, the facts upon which he sustain'd his character were seen abroad; the thing was not done in a corner: but the manner of conveying this to the soul is different. The things of the Spirit of God are *spiritually discern'd.* Tho' he has us'd similitudes, cloath'd his will with metaphors that are taken from sensible objects, yet 'tis not the resemblance that carries 'em to the mind. 'Tis not acting over the passions, as the Papists do in the tragedy of *Good-Friday*; or troubling the imagination, and assaulting the senses with strong pictures and visible representations: these are the toys of a superstitious fancy; a person who grows up to a religious manhood will *put away such childish things.* If all the moisture of the body was drain'd out at the eyes, it would not make us penitents; nor does the tumult of the affections upon this great doctrine make us believers: we may have pity, sorrow, or affrightment at the thoughts of our Lord's death, and yet have no *faith in his blood: The fellowship of his sufferings* is a great deal more spiritual; it lies lower than the senses. The whole christian life is begun, maintain'd, and nourish'd in this secret way. *David* observes, *Thou didst strengthen me with strength in my soul.* The Apostle speaks of *the hidden man of the heart which is not corruptible:* and in another place of being *strengthen'd with all might in the inner man.*

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1 Cor. ii. 14.

1 Cor. xiii. 4.

Phil. iii. 10.

Psal. cxxxviii. 3.

1 Pet. iii. 4.

Col. i. 11.

This shews us the nature of true religion; *Godliness* is oppos'd to *bodily exercise.* It does not consist in noise and bustle: *He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is that circumcision that is outward in the flesh:* not but that the name of *Jew* was national and public; and the administration of circumcision

1 Tim. iv. 8.

Rom. ii. 28.

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Your reading and hearing are duties, but there's no religion in these, any farther than your souls are Heb. iv. 2. engag'd: The Word did not profit the *Jews, not being mix'd with faith in them that heard it.* You ought to make a public profession of your faith in a Christ without you, in one who was manifest in Jude 4. the flesh; *contend for the faith that was once deliver'd to the saints*; but your benefit in these things lies Rom. x. 10. all within; *With the heart man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation.* 'Tis one thing to be satisfy'd about the report that is given us of him, to know and admire the history, to approve and defend the scheme; and another to derive virtue and life from him, and Mal. iv. 2. feel *the healing that there is under his wings.* We must Rom. vi. 17. *obey from the heart that form of sound doctrine which is deliver'd to us.* He was manifest *in the flesh*; but if he is justified with you and me, it is *in the Spirit.* Both these interpretations of the words are suppos'd in, and deriv'd from, the next, *viz.*

3. That the Spirit is the author of this justification; 'tis he that works upon our souls in the manner that

that I have been describing. The whole life of religion is begun and carry'd on by him: He brings us to Christ, and brings Christ to us. This is the great subject of practical and experimental religion; and I shall consider it in the following method. SERM. XVII.

1. How we are to understand this phrase; or what it is for a Saviour to be *justified.*

2. Upon what particular *heads* he has this justification.

3. *When* the Spirit does this office.

4. That He who is thus justified must be GOD.

5. This, as well as the former branch of our religion, is *a mystery of godliness.*

I. We shall enquire into the sense of the words, that Christ Jesus was JUSTIFIED. You know, that when this is applied to sinners, it signifies a pardon to all guilt, and their acceptance in the beloved: that their *iniquities are not imputed to 'em,* but cover'd and blotted out, and remember'd no more: They are blown away as a thick cloud, because *he was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* But, it's plain, this cannot be the meaning of the word when it is applied to him, *who knew no sin; the Lamb of God without blemish and without spot.* He is not justified by the removal of any guilt, or the turning away of God's anger from him. He had *done no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:* In him the Father was always well pleased. His justification is of another kind, and comprehends these two articles. Psal. xxxii. 1. 2 Cor. v. 21. 1 Pet. i. 19.

1. That he was approv'd and own'd.

2. That he was prais'd and admir'd.

1. He had a Divine approbation; both to his character and to his actions. That he was the Messiah, the anointed of the Lord; and that what he did was right and good. As he saith, *He that sent* John viii. 29.

me

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me is with me, the Father has not left me alone, for I do always the things that pleaſe him. He was indeed
Iſa. liii. 3. *deſpis'd and rejected of men:* They call'd his pretenſions an impoſture; but at the ſame time he could ſay, *He that ſent me is true, whom ye knew not, but I know him, and am come from him.* The Apoſtle
1 Pet. ii. 4. obſerves this diſtinction, that *He was diſallow'd indeed of men, but choſen of God, and precious.* And as he was always conſcious to this himſelf, ſo it is the very thing that the Spirit gives his witneſs to in the hearts of believers. As Chriſt ſaith of his
John xvii. 7, 8, 25. diſciples, *They have known that all things, whatſoever thou haſt given me, are of thee; for I have given them the words which thou gaveſt me, and they have received them, and have known ſurely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didſt ſend me. O righteous Father, the world has not known thee, but I have known thee; and theſe have known that thou haſt ſent me.* This was a matter of ſo much concern to our Lord, that he deſires ſuch a faith may ſpread among men, *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, that the world may believe that thou haſt ſent me.*

This was his juſtification: *I know,* ſaith he to the *Jews, whence I came, and whither I go.* His inward aſſurance of this was the thing that he ſet in balance to all their reproaches; as it was foretold
Iſa. l. 6, 7, 8, 9. he ſhould do: For this reaſon he *gave his back to the ſmiters, and his cheeks to them that pluck'd off the hair; he hid not his face from ſhame and ſpitting:* For, ſaith he, *the Lord God will help me, therefore I ſhall not be confounded; therefore have I ſet my face as a flint, and I know that I ſhall not be aſham'd.* And in the perſuit of this account, he uſes the very word of my text, *He is near that juſtifies me, who will contend with me? let us ſtand together; who is mine adverſary? let him come near to me; behold the Lord God will help me, who is he that will condemn*

me? You see here, that he considers himself as an accused person, as one upon his trial; and that he looks for all his vindication from above; that none of their charges could be made good. And this was so evident to the confusion of enemies, that the Apostle *Peter* could tell the *Jews, That Jesus of Nazareth was a man approv'd of God among 'em, by signs and miracles, and wonders that God did by him in the midst of them, as themselves also know.* SERM. XVII. Acts ii. 22.

2. He was also prais'd and admir'd, as another part of his justification. As it is written, *Let God be true, and every man a liar, that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.* There was more than a bare testimony given to his character; for this came attended with commendations. Thus saith the Father of him, *He is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.* When the Seventy return'd and told him, *Even the Devils are subject to us thro' thy name,* he tells 'em there was something else which they should rather rejoice in, *viz.* that *their names were written in heaven*; but it is observ'd, *in that hour* he was fill'd with divine pleasure from two things: *First,* The opening of his kingdom among men, that God who had *hid these things from the wise and prudent, reveal'd 'em unto babes:* And, *Secondly,* From the fulness that this was an earnest of, *All things are deliver'd to me of my Father.* This he declar'd at last, That *the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came from God, and went to God.* Rom. iii. 4. Mat. iii. 17. Luke x. 17. —20, 21, 22. John xiii. 3.

II. On what heads is Christ thus justified? I have hinted at these already, and shall now be more distinct and copious. You will find, that the vindication given to our blessed Lord is in the following articles.

1. As to his mission, that he was sent of God.
2. As to his personal glory.

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3. As to his fitneſs for the undertaking.
4. As to the propriety of thoſe methods that he us'd.
5. As to his claim of the great reward above.
6. As to his actual poſſeſſion of it. Upon thoſe heads did the Spirit give a teſtimony to him, and thus was he *juſtified* from all the unbelief of men, and the reproach of devils.

1. He clear'd up his Divine miſſion; That he was *ſent of God* into the world, as the long expected bleſſing, the hope of *Iſrael. The promiſe made to the Fathers was fulfill'd to their children.* The Spirit reveal'd him to thoſe that receiv'd the report. *He that receiv'd his teſtimony ſet to his ſeal that God is true. Philip* comes full of the character to *Nathaniel, We have found him of whom Moſes in the Law and the Prophets did write.*

Acts xiii. 32, 33.

John iii. 33.

i, 45.

And, before this, when he was in the meer paſſive age of life, a poor helpleſs infant, there was care taken to make him known; *then* was he juſtified in the Spirit. Thus we read of *Simeon, a juſt and devout man*, that *he waited for the conſolation of Iſrael:* as all the good people of every age have done; they long'd, they pray'd, they believ'd the coming of a Meſſiah; but of this good man it is ſaid, that *the Holy Ghoſt was upon him; i. e.* as it is afterwards explain'd, it was *reveal'd unto him by the Holy Ghoſt, that he ſhould not taſt death, before he had ſeen the Lord's Chriſt.* This was preparatory warning; but beſides that, the teſtimony is given in a nearer way; for it is ſaid, that *he came* BY THE SPIRIT *into the temple, when the parents brought in the child Jeſus, to do for him after the cuſtom of the law.* So that, you ſee what care the Spirit had to make this diſcovery; how early he juſtified that great Redeemer, who was then *manifeſt in the fleſh.* Good old *Simeon* was deſirous to deliver up his life with his conviction, as if he had now

Luke ii. 25, 26.

Ver. 27.

now ſtaid long enough: *Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation, which thou haſt prepar'd before the face of all people.* This was from the teſtimony of the Holy Ghoſt; for *Joſeph and his mother marvell'd at the things that were ſpoken of him.* Nay, that at the mouth of two witneſſes every thing might be eſtabliſh'd, there was alſo one *Anna a propheteſs, who coming in at that inſtant gave thanks likewiſe to the Lord, and ſpake of him to all them, that look'd for redemption in Jeruſalem.*

SERM. XVII. Ver. 29, 30, 31. Ver. 33. Ver. 38.

This ſhews that there was a great number of people who believ'd that the fulneſs of time was not far off. As *Simeon* waited for the conſolation of *Iſrael*, ſo others *look'd for redemption in Jeruſalem.* And therefore the great queſtion now muſt be that of *John's* diſciples, *Is this he that ſhould come, or look we for another?* To that the Spirit gave in his witneſs, He kept thoſe whom the Lord had choſen from wandring after impoſtors: As our Saviour obſerves, *All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers, but the ſheep did not hear 'em.* Now, what is it that always did, and always ſhall preſerve this little flock from running into *the error of the wicked?* Nothing in themſelves, but only the care of that Spirit who *leads into the way of all truth.* From this, it is impoſſible to deceive the Elect; that the ſigns and wonders which thoſe falſe Prophets and falſe Chriſts are ſaid to do had no influence upon 'em. Such as he had no care of are caught in the ſnare. *Ye believe not, becauſe you are not of my ſheep,* ſaith our Lord to the *Jews.* Antichriſt, who is call'd the beaſt, is ſaid to *make war with the Saints, and to overcome 'em; for power is given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations, and all that dwell on the earth ſhall worſhip him, whoſe names are not written in the book of life, of the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world.*

Mat. xi. 3. John x. 8. John x. 26. Rev. xiii. 7, 8.

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2. Christ is justified by the Spirit as to his own glory, that which he has in his Person. *He that comes from above is above all. The Spirit*, saith he, *shall glorifie me; for he shall take of mine, and shew it unto you.* And what is his? *All that the Father has is mine, and therefore I said he shall take of mine, and shew it unto you; q. d.* My promise refers to no less than the testimony that the Spirit shall give of my equality with the Father. And tho' this is a mystery, it is nevertheless a truth; it is receiv'd with adoration; it comes within none of our descriptions: we are not able to explain it, and yet it's believ'd; it's what we hold by, as *an anchor of hope*, sure and stedfast; 'tis what we are built upon, as *a pillar and ground of truth.* This is the usual work of *the Spirit of wisdom and revelation*, when he has been a Spirit of grace and supplications.

Joh. iii. 31. xvi. 15.

If men live in a sense of religion, in a course of prayer and dependence, to them it is the dear doctrine of their souls, and what they tremble at the thoughts of parting with; for *if the foundations be destroy'd, what can the righteous do?* I may appeal to the characters of persons, that a belief of this doctrine is no bar to *free-thinking*; that the people who entertain it are far from giving up the liberty of their reason; they are not behind-hand with others in paying a regard to that faculty. To represent 'em as going on in a blind implicit way, is to abuse the tenderest part of their reputation. The man who appropriates the title of *free-thinker* to himself, is guilty of an insolence to the world, and a piece of ill manners to his whole nature.

Ps. xi. 3.

Blessed be God, we have search'd the Scriptures, we have look'd into 'em diligently, and endeavour'd to know the mind of the Spirit; and we think it is a rational way of talking, that if the Spirit is to glorifie Christ, he is to shew us his full glory; and

and that, not in deceitful terms, such as may ensnare us into idolatry: making him the first of the creation, is far from coming up to his glory. If he is really a God, nothing short of Divinity can be his proper character. 'Tis in vain to tell me how much better he is than the Angels; that's not enough if I am to conceive of him as the first cause, and the last end of the whole creation; *For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are on earth, visible or invisible, whether they be thrones, dominions, principalities or powers: all things were created by him and for him.* Col. i. 16.

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Now, the Spirit is said to glorifie him by *taking of his*, and shewing 'em unto us. And, what may be call'd *his*? the allotment made to him of the Father? some limited portion? no, ALL *that the Father has are mine.* This cannot be true upon any other ground than a full equality: for, if he is a creature, he is so far from having all that the Father has, that there is the same infinite distance between him and a God, that there is between a God and a worm? Every creature is nearer to an insect than he is to a God; no degrees of glory can set him above the common character. But how does Christ appear to those in whose souls the Spirit has taken his things, and shewn 'em? Did you never know a person loose both in his talk and his morals, who despis'd God's law in his actions, and the Gospel in his arguments? Have you never known such a one awaken'd, convinc'd and made to cry out, What shall I do to be sav'd? Has he, after this, come to be easie and satisfy'd in religion, to have a peace and hope in believing? Enquire of such a one, what he takes his Saviour to be, what notions he has of *him*, who is the author, and must be the finisher of his faith? Certainly the man, by growing sober, has not lost his reason. Because he minds the sabbath, dare not

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swear and drink as he us'd to do, will you for this call him an Enthusiast? Here's a remarkable change in his life, and shall there be no regard had to his way of thinking? I'm apt to believe, it's very easie to guess on which side of the question such an awaken'd penitent, such an enlighten'd convert would give his answer. He'll cry out, as *Thomas* did upon a recovery, *My Lord and my God.*

Joh. xx. 28.

3. Christ is justified in his fitness for the undertaking: that he is equal to the design. God has *laid help on one that is mighty, one chosen from among the people, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness.* We are to believe that he had all that's requir'd in a Mediator between God and man; a purity in himself that he was the holy One of God; a merit in his sufferings, that when he was *number'd with the transgressors, he made his soul an offering for sin. He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* This can arise from nothing but the dignity and value of his Person; not only what's *moral*, that he should be innocent, and die the just for the unjust; *that* might have been said of an Angel; but what may be call'd a *natural* dignity. The atonement that he made was fit for an infinite Majesty to receive, and equal to all that an infinite Justice demanded; and therefore we read of a GOD *that purchas'd the church with his own blood.*

Ps. lxxxix. 19. Job xxxiii. 23. Isa. liii. 10, 12. Heb. ix. 26. Acts xx. 28.

To say, that this expression does not prove him God, because as such he could not die or bleed, is an argument that concludes as much against their own scheme as any other: for if he is allow'd to have any nature besides the humane, if he is above the Angels, even *that Nature* could not be said to die. Had he been only an Angel, to talk of the blood of such a one, is a harshness of language that we could not allow; and it can be understood no other way than this, that tho' he died, was a

man,

man, a partaker of that flesh and blood that made him capable of such a fate, yet he was also to be consider'd under a higher character. Now, it is plainly said of him who purchas'd the church with his own blood, that his *superior Nature* was that of a GOD: that as it is certain he was more than a man, so this Word is to tell you *what* he is more. SERM. XVII.

If any would turn the phrase thus, that the church is indeed the flock of God, which Christ has purchas'd with his blood, methinks, the holy Spirit was aware of that shuffle, and has barr'd against it, by telling us, that this God purchas'd the flock with HIS OWN *blood*. That phrase is so fully relative to the Person of whom he speaks, that according to his way of talking, the Proprietor and the Purchaser of this church is the same. He *whose* it is (that is God) has laid down the price of it.

There's another interpretation of these words that I have heard of; [for if we follow these notions closely, we shall find 'em shift and double] that the expression *purchas'd with his blood* does not refer to *God* in the clause immediately foregoing, but to *Christ* of whom he had formerly spoke; but if you consult your Bibles, you will see that he had not mention'd the name of Christ in less than seven verses before; and one would think the opinion is as far-fetch'd as the connexion; and that certainly people must be strangely in love with a notion, which they're resolv'd to have against all the rules of grammar and language. Whether of the expositions appears to have less of force and violence, ours that joins a word with that which is the nearest to it, or theirs that trails it backwards the length of seven verses, into a sentence that was entire and concluded before?

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'Tis upon the head of his fitneſs for the work of redemption, that the Spirit glorifies the Son: *Our converſation is in heaven, from whence we look for a Saviour Chriſt Jeſus the Lord.* And, what are we looking for at his hand? that which is no leſs than the work of Omnipotence, what none but a God can do: *That he will change our vile body, that it may be faſhion'd like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to ſubdue all things unto himſelf.* If any one ſaith, that as he is the beſt and greateſt of creatures, ſo every thing muſt be ſubject to him, *that* puts my faith however out of a divine correſpondence: it fixes on an object that is *not God.* But, ſuppoſing we ſhould uſe other Scriptures as we do *this*, and ſay that the term of *ſubduing all things* does not ſignifie Omnipotence, where ſhould we have one text to prove that perfection of the divine nature? or how could it be more fully aſſerted of the Father, than it is here of the Son? What reaſon have I to think that the words in this Epiſtle mean infinitely leſs than they do in *Job* xlii. 2. *I know that thou canſt do every thing, and that no counſel can be withholden from thee?* 'Tis from the Divinity of Chriſt that we argue his fitneſs for the whole deſign; for he muſt be *counted worthy of more honour than Moſes, inaſmuch as he built the houſe, and ſo has more honour than the houſe.* And he *who has thus built all things, is* GOD.

Phil. iii. 20, 21.

Heb. iii. 3, 4.

SERMON

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Decemb. 21. 1718.

4. UR Saviour is justified in the Spirit, as to the propriety of those methods that he us'd in working out the redemption of his people. He proceeded in the right way, that which infinite wisdom had contriv'd. He pursu'd the plan that was laid in *the counsel of peace. The Son of man went as it was written of him*; he spake of his sufferings as the result of a previous agreement: *The Father knows me, and I know the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep.* Both his enemies and his people were apt to confine their thoughts, and look no farther than the malice of the *Jews*, that was all enrag'd by the envy of the priests. Thus narrowly do the two Disciples that were going to *Emmaus* tell their melancholy story; that *Jesus of Nazareth was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, but the chief priests and rulers deliver'd him to be condemn'd to death, and have crucify'd him; but,* say they, *we trusted it had been he who should have redeem'd Israel.* As if they had said, it appears by such a fate, that we were mistaken in our man. They knew not how to bring the cross into their notions of a Saviour: a death of that nature had ras'd out all the regard they us'd to have for his miracles and doctrine.

Joh. x. 15.

Luke xxiv. 19, 20, 21.

But in this he is justified by the Spirit: all that scandal's over which was once so important to the Disciples. We can now consider the whole train of his reproaches, torments, and his death as a design: *Him, being deliver'd by the determinate counsel* Act. ii. 23.

and

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and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucify'd and slain. What a different way of thinking had these good men got into! Before his death they could never be patient at what he often told 'em, that the Son of man should be deliver'd into the hands of men, and they would take him and crucifie him. *Peter* rebuk'd him for it: *Lord, this be far from thee. Sorrow fill'd their hearts*, they knew not what to say of it; and yet after these things were over, the offence of the cross was made to cease. It was so far from being their dread and shame, as they once thought it, that they could *glory in the cross of Christ*: And tho' this doctrine remain'd a stumbling-block to their countrymen the *Jews*, it was none to them. *They preach'd Christ crucify'd both to the Jews and Greeks, the wisdom of God, and the power of God.*

Joh. xvi. 6.

Gal. vi. 14.

1 Cor. i. 24.

'Tis plain from a cloud of witnesses out of the old Testament, that the great design of salvation was always reveal'd as a thing to be brought about by the sufferings of a Redeemer. The first promise of all was not silent upon this doctrine: for, tho' *the seed of the woman* was to bruise the serpent's head, yet the serpent was to *bruise his heel*; and all along, as a greater light came in with later prophesies, it was still to shew that there must be an atonement. But the *Jews*, to whom the oracles of God were committed, had a vail upon their minds, and to the last they were blind as to this character of a Messiah. They who were so critical in knowing the place of his birth, and the family out of which he was to arise, never so much as think of the main part that he should act, that he *was to be cut off, but not for himself.* This was so far from being their opinion, that they give it out as a challenge, *If he be the Christ the King of Israel, let him descend from the cross and we will believe.* Now,

Dan. ix. 26.

Mat. xxvii. 42.

had

had he descended from the cross, they ought not to have believ'd him: had he not submitted to death, and even of that scandalous sort, he had been none of that Saviour who was to *bear our sins in his body on the tree*, and to make an *open shew of principalities and powers, triumphing over 'em in the air*. SERM. XVIII.

Upon this head he is justified by the Spirit: the Apostles made no secret of that, which we should have thought they might have conceal'd, his being *numbred among the transgressors*. This was no longer a reproach to them, but what they ventur'd to talk of in the most public manner: *They that dwell at Jerusalem and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the Prophets, which are read every sabbath day, have fulfill'd them in condemning him: And tho' they found no cause of death in him, yet they desir'd Pilate that he should be slain: And when they had fulfill'd all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.* Acts xiii. 27, 28, 29. This scandalous circumstance of his death they are not asham'd of, but are to own it on all occasions, not only in their doctrines to the people, but their arguments to the enemy. Thus they confronted the greatest authority at *Jerusalem: The God of our fathers rais'd up Jesus, whom ye slew and hang'd on a tree.* ver. 30.

5. He is justified in the Spirit, as to his claim of a reward in heaven. There was a glory design'd for him, as the recompence of all his duty and trouble. Under that view the Father has call'd him by the name of a servant: *My servant shall deal prudently, and be exalted and extoll'd, and be very high:* AS *many were astonish'd at him, his visage was so marr'd more than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men.* In proportion to the astonishment that was occasion'd by this, SO *shall he sprinkle many nations.* It is very evident, Isa. lii. 13, 14, 15.

the

SERM. XVIII. the reward conferr'd upon him is more than his own perſonal glory above; it alſo takes in an empire below. Thus he is to ſprinkle many nations,
Deu. xxxii. 2. drop the Goſpel among 'em *as the rain, and diſtill it as the dew*, by which he will convey a ſenſe of his majeſty into the minds of thoſe who before deſpis'd him: *Kings ſhall ſhut their mouths at him; for that which has not been told them ſhall they ſee, and that which they have not heard ſhall they conſider.*

Little could his enemies, or indeed his Diſciples, imagine, that *the contradiction of ſinners which he en-*
Heb. xii. 3. *dur'd againſt himſelf*, was both the merit and the preparation of a future happineſs. But afterwards he approv'd himſelf to their reaſons upon this head:
Luke xxiv. 26. *Ought not Chriſt to ſuffer theſe things, and to enter into his glory?* His enduring the croſs, and deſpiſing the ſhame, is accounted for by this ſuppoſition: he ſubmitted to all That for *the joy that was ſet before* him. This came to be underſtood as a
Phil. ii. 8, 9. good argument afterwards: *He was obedient to death, even the death of the croſs, and* THEREFORE *God has highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name.* During his life-time he was e-
Iſa. liii. 4. ſteem'd *ſtricken, ſmitten of God, and afflicted.* Thus it was foretold they would reaſon: *Let us perſecute and take him, for God has forſaken him*; and ſo they did in fact: *He truſted in God that he would ſave him, let him deliver now if he will have him*;
Joh. xvii. 4, 5. and yet in all this he *glorified the Father upon earth, and finiſh'd the work that was given him to do.* Upon which he lays his claim to *the glory he had*
Rev. v. 12. *with the Father before the world was. Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing.*

6. The Spirit juſtifies Chriſt in his actual poſſeſſion of the reward. In this world he had a

claim

claim to it, and now he enjoys the thing itself: *I overcame, and am set down with my Father in his Throne.* This gives a value to the other doctrines: for if it can be prov'd that he was rais'd by the Father, and set at his own right hand, it will from thence be concluded, that all his former sufferings were appointed and admir'd. Now, to this the Holy Spirit has given an abundant evidence, and made it the main article of our religion. The Apostles were set apart to be *witnesses of his resurrection*; and in this office they acted *by the Spirit*, who had been promis'd to 'em. Thus they tell their enemies, *Ye denied the holy One and the just, and desir'd a murderer to be granted to you, and kill'd the Prince of life, whom God has rais'd from the dead, whereof we are witnesses.* They repeat the same afterwards upon another trial, with the addition of this greater testimony, that is mention'd in my text: *Him has God exalted with his own right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins; and we are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Ghost, whom God has given to them that obey him.* When they speak in this manner, 'tis agreeable to what our Lord himself had told 'em: he said unto 'em, *Thus it is written, and thus it behov'd Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and ye are witnesses of these things, and behold I send the promise of my Father upon you.*

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Rev. iii. 21.

Acts i. 22.

iii. 14, 15.

Ver. 32.

Luke xxiv. 46, 48, 49.

The miracles they wrought were so many attestations to the glory of a Redeemer. 'Tis thus that *Peter* explains the cure of the poor lame man in *Solomon*'s porch: *Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we be examin'd of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; be it known unto you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, and whom God rais'd from the dead, even*

Acts iv. 8, 9, 10.

SERM. XVIII. 11, 12. *by him does this man ſtand here before you whole.* He goes on to tell 'em what they would not believe, that *this is the ſtone which was ſet at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner; neither is there ſalvation in any other.* The preaching the Goſpel, and the wonders they ſhew'd in confirmation of that doctrine, were ſo many public arguments that their Saviour had *loos'd the bonds of* ver. 33. *death.* Therefore it is ſaid, that *with great power gave the Apoſtles witneſs of the reſurrection of the Lord Jeſus, and great grace was upon 'em all.* This was a divine teſtimony given in to the faith of be- Heb. ii. 3, 4. lievers: *The ſalvation that begun to be ſpoke by the Lord Jeſus was confirm'd to us by them that heard him; God bearing 'em witneſs, both with ſigns and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, according to his own will.* This leads me to ſhew,

III. WHEN the holy Spirit gives in his teſtimony, and fulfills the office that's devolv'd upon him of juſtifying that God who was manifeſt in the fleſh. This may be conſider'd in a way of gradation: he does it *at ſundry times and divers manners.* The Scripture has furniſh'd us with ſeveral particulars. Chriſt was juſtified in the Spirit,

1. By the prophetical warnings that were given of him.
2. By his perſonal furniture.
3. At the hour of his death and ſuffering.
4. More eſpecially at his reſurrection.
5. At the day of Pentecoſt.
6. In the conviction of ſinners.
7. In the conſolation of believers.

1. The Spirit juſtified our dear Lord before his coming into the world. This he did thro' all the Gen. iv. 26. ages of religion, ever ſince *men began to call upon the name of the Lord.* It was by faith that they offer'd

offer'd *acceptable sacrifices* down from righteous *Abel* to the fulness of time: *Of this salvation the Prophets have enquir'd and search'd diligently, who prophesied of the grace of God that should come unto you. Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ that was in 'em did signifie, when it testified before-hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.* You see, this was their main enquiry: the thing they propheſied of was the grace that should come to us: the Spirit that they propheſied by was *the Spirit of Christ:* the discoveries they receiv'd from That were about the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. They did not consider themselves as the servants of a particular generation, but took it for granted they were writing for posterity: *Unto whom it was reveal'd, that not to themselves, but to us they did minister the things that are reported unto you.*

Heb. xi. 4. 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. ver. 12.

Tho' Christ was only manifest in these last times, yet he was *verily fore-ordain'd before the foundation of the world unto our glory:* and that was all along the food given in to the faith and hope of the old Testament Saints. The Apostle tells the *Jews*, that this is an affair of which God had *spoken by the mouth of all his Prophets since the world began*; by which assertion you see what a compass he takes both in breadth and length. *All the holy Prophets* have born this testimony, and they have done it ever *since the world began.* He gives 'em an instance, that *Moses truly said unto the Fathers, a Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you like unto me:* And then adds, *Yea all the Prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken have likewise foretold of these days:* As if that was their main business, to let the world know what God would do in the fulness of time. He speaks of this as the grand concern: *Behold the days come, that I will perform that good thing which I have*

ver. 20. Acts iii. 21. ver. 22, 24. Jer. xxiii. 14, 15.

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promis'd to the house of Israel, and the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time will I cause the branch of righteousness to grow up unto David, and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. Out of these particulars the Apostle works an argument, by which he would insinuate himself, and the doctrine that he came with, to the esteem of the *Jews: Ye are the children of the Prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers.* This was the office of the Spirit in those early ages, not only to give 'em light about their present duty, but to put 'em in mind of that *better thing that God had provided for us.* For these *all died in faith, not having receiv'd the promises, but they saw 'em afar off, were persuaded of 'em, and confess'd they were pilgrims and strangers upon the earth.* 'Twas thus that *David being a Prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath unto him, that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne: he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, nor did his flesh see corruption.*

Heb. xi. 40.

ver. 13.

Acts ii. 29, 30, 31.

2. Our Lord was justified in the Spirit as to his personal furniture. We read of his qualifications for an office that never any but himself was put into: *He whom God has sent, speaks the words of God, for God gives not the Spirit by measure to him.* What he did either in a way of duty or of miracle is ascrib'd to this. 'Twas thus that he discover'd himself to be the Mediator between God and man, and determin'd the faith of good people in the greatest concern they could have. *John* the *Baptist* must have been acquainted with him in his childhood and youth, their mothers being so near relations. He must have heard of the wonderful things that happen'd at the visit that *Mary* paid to *Elisabeth*, who cried out, *Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come unto me; for lo,*

Joh. iii. 34.

Luke i. 43, 44.

as

as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the babe leapt in my womb for joy. He heard, no doubt of it, what things his own father said at his circumcision, that he should be *the Prophet of the highest*, and clos'd it with those words, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel who has redeem'd and visited his people*; and what *Simeon* and *Anna* declar'd soon after the birth of Jesus. Tho' he continu'd in the deserts, he could not be such a stranger in *Israel*, as not to have the record of these events. ver. 68, 76.

But yet he professes that the main testimony was given by the holy Spirit: *I knew him not*, saith he, *i. e.* not fully, not free of all scruple, *but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he that shall baptize with the holy Ghost; and I saw and bare record, that this is the Son of God.* The passage he refers to, is what the several Evangelists have given us, that *when Jesus was baptiz'd and pray'd, the heaven was open'd, and the holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven which said, Thou art my beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased.* Thus does Christ speak of his ministerial qualifications, that a fulness of wisdom was in him: *The Spirit of the Lord*, saith he, *is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the Gospel.* And this was long since foretold, that the Spirit of the Lord should *rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord.* Thus he perform'd his miracles, as *Peter* tells *Cornelius, God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppress'd of the Devil; for God was with him.* This was the method into which he threw his designs, for *he was*

Joh. i. 33, 34. Mat. iii. 16, 17. Luke iv. 18. Isa. xi. 2. Acts x. 38.

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led by the Spirit into the wilderneſs to be tempted of the Devil.

Mat. iv. 1.

3. The Spirit juſtified our dear Lord at the hour of his death and ſufferings. This was by giving value to his blood, and ſupporting the courage and reſolution of his humane nature. The Scripture has been very particular, that *thro' the eternal Spirit, he offer'd himſelf without ſpot unto God.* It was not merely the extremity of dying that brought in an everlaſting righteouſneſs, but the merit aroſe from the dignity of him that ſuffer'd. He was then full of the holy Ghoſt. This ſet a joy before him that made him neither afraid nor aſham'd to die: for if it is ſaid of *Stephen*, that *he being full of the holy Ghoſt, look'd up ſtedfaſtly to heaven, and ſaw the glory of God*, much more may it be affirm'd of him who had not the Spirit by meaſure.

Heb. ix. 14.

Acts vii. 55.

4. Another time when the Spirit did his office, was upon the reſurrection of our Saviour. Then was *he declar'd to be the Son of God with power, by the Spirit of holineſs.* Sometimes this work is aſcrib'd to the Father, that *he glorified his Son Jeſus, he rais'd him from the dead, and gave him glory. Thou*, ſaith Chriſt, *wilt not leave my ſoul in hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thy holy One to ſee corruption.* Sometimes it is ſaid of the Son himſelf, that *he loos'd the pains of death, becauſe it was not poſſible that he ſhould be holden of it.* This agrees to what he had told 'em before: *No man takes my life from me; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.*

Rom. i. 4.

Acts iii. 13.

1 Pet. i. 21.

Pſal. xvi. 10.

Acts ii. 24.

Joh. x. 18.

And in ſeveral places it is aſſerted of the holy Ghoſt. Hence we read of *the Spirit of Him who rais'd up Jeſus from the dead*, that this Spirit *is to quicken us.* He was put to death in the fleſh, but *quicken'd in the Spirit.* Under this head I may bring in the great things that he did between his leaving

Rom. viii. 11.

1 Pet. iii. 18.

leaving the ſepulchre, and going up for good and all to the kingdom. His converſation with the Diſciples for the ſpace of forty days is mention'd this way, that *he thro' the holy Ghoſt had given commandment to the Apoſtles whom he had choſen.* 'Twas thus that he inſtructed 'em, and *open'd their understandings*: for he had told 'em before his death, *I have many things to ſay to you, but ye cannot bear 'em now: howbeit, when the Comforter is come, whom I will ſend in my name, he ſhall lead you into all truth.* So that when he ſpake to 'em concerning things pertaining to the kingdom of God, it was *thro' the holy Ghoſt* that he gave 'em commandments. In this manner they were not only perſuaded of his reſurrection themſelves, but led into the right way of declaring it to others: *That repentance and remiſſion of ſins ſhould be preach'd among all nations in his name, beginning at Jeruſalem.* Thus he was juſtified in the Spirit.

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Acts i. 2. Luke xxiv. 45. Joh. xvi. 12, 13.

5. This was moſt eminently done at the day of Pentecoſt: they tarried at *Jeruſalem* till they were *endued with power from on high.* This he calls *baptizing 'em with the holy Ghoſt: he fell upon every one of 'em.* All the retinue of that effuſion was wonderful, the manner of its coming on, and every conſequence that follow'd after. There was *ſuddenly a ſound from heaven as the ruſhing of a mighty wind, and it fill'd all the houſe where they were ſitting: And there appear'd unto 'em cloven tongues like as of fire; And they were all fill'd with the holy Ghoſt, and began to ſpeak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave 'em utterance.* This amaz'd, as well it might, *all the devout men* that were gather'd from every nation to the feaſt at *Jeruſalem.* But,

Luke xxiv. 49. Acts i. 5. ii. 2, 3, 4. ver. 7.

Peter defends the Providence againſt them that *mocked,* and explains it to thoſe that *marvell'd.* That they are to underſtand it two ways: *Firſt,* as an accompliſhment of an ancient prophecy

SERM. XVIII. out of *Joel*. And, *Secondly*, as a testimony given from heaven to that Person whom they had despis'd, and hated, and kill'd. From hence they might see, that he was admitted into the honours of another world, tho' he had been so rudely treat-
ver. 33. ed in this: *Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having receiv'd of the Father the promise of the holy Ghost, he has shed forth this which ye now see and hear.* What they saw and heard gave in a full evidence, that tho' he had been despis'd and rejected of men, yet he was chosen of God, and precious. And upon the whole he concludes, *Let all*
ver. 36. *the house of Israel know assuredly, that the same Jesus whom ye have crucified, has God made both Lord and Christ.* By this they might find he was another sort of Person than they took him for; the great Head of authority above, and the great Head of influence below. Such an effusion as that was an argument of his having a throne. He could not be deserted of the Father, as they imagin'd, if he receiv'd such a fulness into his own hands, and made these distributions among his people. This is what the Apostle *Peter* enlarges on in his speech or sermon, and he refers to it afterwards in his
1 Pet. i. 12. letter, that *the Gospel is preach'd with the holy Ghost sent down from heaven.*

6. The Spirit continues to justifie Christ in the conviction of sinners: he attends the preaching of the Gospel, and makes it useful to those who are *dead in trespasses and sins*, as our Lord promis'd he
Joh. xvi. 8, 9, 10, 11. should do: *When he is come he shall convince the world of sin, and righteousness, and judgment; Of sin, because they believe not in me; Of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*

These are things that none but the Spirit can impress upon us: they are what man's wisdom is so far from teaching, that it reckons 'em *foolishness.*

The sin of not believing in him gives no trouble till they are made to see what he is in himself, and what he must be to them, if ever they are happy. Their unbelief is what they us'd to plead for; they had a great many arguments to defend it: but when the Spirit fell to work with 'em, as it is said of the *Jews* who gloried in having shed his blood, they were *prick'd in their hearts, and cried out, Men and brethren, what shall we do?* then this sin lay heavy upon 'em. SERM. XVIII. Acts ii. 37.

It's the same as to that righteousness that is reveal'd to us by the holy Spirit. Men by nature have no notion of any other acceptance with God than what they give themselves: but when the holy Ghost has humbled us for our iniquity, he shews us that no merit of ours can be the ground of a pardon; but the righteousness in which we are justified is owing to this, that *Christ is gone to the Father.* He leads us up to the Advocate whom we have above, and engages all our desires to be *found in him.* And then, lest their convictions should be attended with dark thoughts about the event of a war with Satan, he tells 'em that the *prince of this world is judged,* and that we come by our peace, and hope, and joy in believing. 'Tis his blessing upon our ministry, that makes Christ known among you: *Ye are manifestly declar'd to be the epistles of Christ ministred by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.* 2 Cor. iii. 3.

7. The Spirit justifies our blessed Lord by the consolations that are given to a believer. Our duty is express'd by *walking in the Spirit*; our privilege is call'd a being *led by the Spirit*; and, as many as are so *are the Sons of God.* Now, in all this operation, he is leading the soul nearer to Jesus Christ. *He shall glorify me,* saith our Lord, *for he shall take of mine, and shew it unto you.* Thus he carries on *the* Gal. v. 25. Rom. viii. 14.

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work of faith with power. The holiness he recommends to *us* is that he shews in *Christ*; He takes of *his*: And when he conveys any comfort into our souls, it's a taking of *his*, revealing his love and his grace, and from each of these he raises in the believer a courage to die as the Apostle argues;

1 John ii. 28. *Now little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, ye may have confidence, and not be asham'd before him at his coming.*

The sanctification that the Spirit gives us is a living argument that Christ is *head over all things unto the church:* We, as the several members, are nourish'd by a derivation from him, and *increase with the increase of God.* It's thus we know, that he has reconcil'd our souls to Divine justice, and that he has renew'd and prepar'd 'em for the Divine mer-

1 John v. 6. cy. *This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood; and it is the Spirit that bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.* How does he bear witness of these things, that Christ came both for our atonement and for our holiness; but by throwing his evidence within, giving us a conformity to him, and making us partakers of his purity and of a gladness among *his* fellows? This is part of the kingdom of God, which consists in peace and *joy in the holy Ghost.* And happy are the people that justify Him who laid down his life to justify them.

1 Cor. xii. 3. *No man, speaking by the Spirit of God, calls Jesus accursed; and no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the holy Ghost.*

SERMON

SERMON XIX.

Jan. 1. 1718.

IV. HE who is thus juſtified in the Spi- SERM. XIX.
rit is no other than the moſt high GOD. The name that he goes by in the firſt branch of our religion runs thro' the other articles and belongs to all the great things that are ſaid of him in the text. I have ſhewn you, that he could never have anſwer'd the end of being *manifeſt in the fleſh*, if he had not been *God over all, bleſſed for ever*. And I ſhall now conſider his Divine Nature, as it farther appears from the teſtimony of the holy Ghoſt; that He, who receiv'd ſuch a witneſs as this, muſt be God. Becauſe, the Spirit is what he himſelf purchas'd and deſerv'd; what he ſent upon his own authority: This Spirit repreſents him as equal to all the demands of God's juſtice, as the giver of all the grace that his people want; as one capable of anſwering our dependence; and as a perſon entitul'd to the glory of another world. Such a teſtimony as this is too much for a creature: it's only a God who can be thus *juſtified in the Spirit*.

1. Conſider, that the Spirit who gives in this teſtimony of Chriſt, is ſent down upon the *purchaſe* made by Him. Now, who is he that could *deſerve* ſo great a gift to his church? that merit did not ariſe merely from the violence of his pain, or the innocence of his perſon. Suppoſe an An-

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gel had put on a dying nature, and made himſelf capable of enduring the croſs, what had been the proper reward to ſuch an obedience? We may imagine, that as men had put him to death, ſo his integrity would be clear'd; and as God had appointed it, ſo he ſhould have a greater honour upon his return to heaven; but can it be thought that in this action he could be ſignificant enough to make a purchaſe *for others?* And that, of the greateſt bleſſings that ever can be given? If ſuch an Angel was exalted to a higher degree of *perſonal* glory, 'tis as much as he could expect; but is it likely, that we in this lower nature ſhould be ever the better for what he did?

Well, do but give a little ſcope to your meditations; conſider what Chriſt has drawn in, and collected to himſelf by dying; not only *a name above every name*, a better eſtate than that of the Angels, but a fulneſs of grace for all his people. There are many thouſands in the different ages and countries of the world for whom he has *obtain'd an eternal redemption.*

And what does this ſalvation begin with, what is it aſſur'd by, but the gift of the holy Spirit?

Eph. i. 12, 13, 14. Ye truſted in CHRIST, *after ye had heard the word of truth, the goſpel of your ſalvation; in* WHOM *alſo, after ye believ'd, ye were ſeal'd with that holy Spirit of promiſe, which is the earneſt of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchaſed poſſeſſion to the praiſe of* HIS *glory.* This is more than any creature can deſerve: the merit muſt ariſe from the dignity of the perſon that ſuffer'd, becauſe it reaches not only to himſelf, but the whole body of his people: and beſides, it includes not only the common favours which they had loſt, but the greateſt bleſſing that God himſelf could give. God *reveals*

1 Cor. ii. 10, 12. by this Spirit *the things that he has prepar'd for them that love him: We have receiv'd not the Spirit of the world,*

world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God. SERM. XIX.

Now, what must He be, whose blood had such a value in it, that *for his sake*, the Spirit should come down from on high, to fill *his* place, to do *his* work as a deputy, and to share *his* glory as a partner? The Prophet puts the question so high, that no creature can answer it; *Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, and who, being his counsellor, has taught him?* We may, with still more reason, ask, who could *deserve* this Spirit of the Lord, or have merit enough to *oblige* him? Or, to put it into the Prophet's next words, *Who has first given to the Lord?* No creature in heaven or in earth could pretend to the former, to *direct* that Spirit who has produc'd and modell'd the universe, and as little could any *deserve him*, or lay him under an obligation to come and do a greater task than making the world. Isa. xl. 13.

But such a one there is to whom the Spirit was owing, for whose sake believers should have him; or, to preserve the language of the Bible, he has *first given to the Lord, and therefore it shall be repaid him.* Here's one who has *redeem'd them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons*; and *because they are sons, the Spirit of the Son is sent into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* He has done that, which makes it more than an act of bounty for the holy Ghost to be sent; 'tis what eternal justice owes him: And who is he, that could thus bargain with God, and not only desire, but *demand* the greatest blessing that he ever did give, or ever will? Christ has claim'd all this to himself. *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, who shall abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, who dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* Do but take the whole scheme of redemption together; consider with care what the gift of the Spirit is; how useful, how glorious! Rom. xi. 31. Gal. iv. 5, 6. John xiv. 16, 17.

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glorious! and remember of *This* there was a purchase, *i. e.* something was done of equal value to it, that fully deserv'd it. Think seriously of the matter in this connexion, and the current of your meditations will have weight enough to bear down *the crackling of thorns*, and *the laughter of fools*.

2. This Spirit is sent by our Lord's authority. Sometimes he represents his part in sending him as an act of intercession: *I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter*, and there's no doubt to be made of it, but he carried to heaven with him the begging, the inferior, the depending nature; that with which *in the days of his* Heb. v. 2 *flesh he offer'd up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears.*

But he also speaks in a language that signifies a great deal more; as if it was his own doing: *If I go away, I will send him to you.* This was the result of his own greatness, and his return to the glory that he had with the Father before the world Luke was. *I send*, saith he, *the promise of my Father upon* xxiv. 49 *you*; and this was *enduing 'em with power from on high*: 'tis the first grant that he makes from his throne: they were to be endued with power from on high, when he himself had receiv'd *all power both in heaven and in earth.* The Angels then be- Heb. i. 6. gun to pay him their homage: for, *When the first begotten was brought again into the world, it was said, Let all the Angels of God worship him.* He has also given proper notice of his accession to that dignity among those few sheep whom he had left in Joh. vii. the wilderness: *The Spirit was not given till Jesus* 39. *was glorified.* The Scripture, by putting things into that order, lets us see that this is one consequence of his Majesty; it comes in among the first-fruits of his empire.

And,

And, who is great enough to make such a dis- SER M.
posal, at whose command the eternal Spirit comes XIX.
down, and goes thro' the mighty offices of a Sanctifier and a Comforter? This Spirit who should lead 'em into all truth, was *not to speak of himself, but whatsoever he heard he was to speak:* and, saith Christ, *he shall glorifie* ME, *for he shall take of* MINE, *and shew it unto you.* We may use our Lord's own argument: Whether is greater, he that is sent, or he that sent him? certainly, he that sent him. Now, if Jesus had only a created nature, this is more than he could do: men and Angels cannot give the Spirit; but he speaks like a God. *He breath'd on the Disciples, saying, receive ye the holy Ghost.* Joh. xvi. 13, 14. xx. 22.

This is what none could say but himself. I don't deny, but some vain men have pretended to use those words; but theirs ought to be number'd among the mouths that speak blasphemy *against the tabernacle of God*, and some of 'em receiv'd the due reward of their deeds. This language of Christ was fitted to no lips but his own. There could not be a greater crime than to suppose, that *the gift of God might be purchas'd with money.* Consider the design, the nature, the mystery of the Spirit's operations, to what purposes he is present with believers thro' all the dangers and duties of life, and how he carries 'em over death and darkness into the mansions above; and then remember who it is that sends him, and you will soon conclude, that he comes from the *God of salvation, to whom belong the issues from death. There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same* GOD *who works all in all.* Ps. lxviii. 20. 1 Cor. xii. 4, 5, 6.

3. You may farther argue the Divine Nature of our Redeemer from the testimony that the Spirit gives

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gives to him *in your own souls*, when it leads you to depend upon him for acceptance with God. I do not wonder, that they who deny his Deity, throw contempt upon his satisfaction. As they
Heb. x. 29. have *trodden under foot the Son of God, they count the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an*
2 Pet. ii. 1. *unholy or a common thing*; thus *denying the Lord that bought 'em.* 'Tis plain, they see no need of this atonement; they can imagine a way to happiness without it. And from hence you may conclude, that the Spirit has not convinc'd them of *sin*; he has not bound upon the conscience all the severity and terror of a righteous law. The Apostle was *without the law once*; tho' he pretended to value it, yet by that he could see no fault in himself, but brings in this verdict, that *touching the righteousness of the law, he was blameless.* Thus was he *alive* in his own opinion; no pains or sense of death gave
Rom. viii. 9, 13, 14. him any trouble; but at last *the commandment came*, by which phrase he must signifie a great deal more than his regard to it, for that he had all along; *it came* with a new sort of weight, for then *sin reviv'd, and he died.* He would no longer think himself blameless touching the righteousness of the law, for the *commandment that was ordain'd unto life, he found to be unto death; not that that which was good in itself was made death to him, but sin by the commandment appear'd exceeding sinful: for*, saith he, *the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.* Just so it will be with every one of us, when the Spirit of God does those offices upon our souls that he is sent into the world about, *i. e.* to convince of sin, and righteousness, and judgment. When he has convinc'd us of sin, he has virtually struck off all our dependence upon the creature: we dare trust to no duties, no graces or comforts; these are imperfect and impure; neither great enough in their quantity, nor good enough in their nature.

nature. We then look to Chriſt for *righteouſneſs*, becauſe he is gone to the Father. SERM. XIX.

How ſhould his *going to the Father* make us apprehenſive of a righteouſneſs by him? It certainly proclaims the Divinity of his Perſon, that he is equal with God, and as ſuch a one, he is gone to manage the whole concern of our redemption. An infinite Nature was offended in its holineſs, and engag'd againſt us in its juſtice. Now, who could be fit to tranſact with him upon the head of peace and reconciliation? *Job* takes it for granted, that there could be no pardon, becauſe, ſaith he, *He is not a man as I am, that I ſhould come before him.* His argument turns upon this, that whoever deals with God in a treaty of ſalvation for poor loſt ſinners, muſt be upon *his* level; as great as he is, or as he is call'd a *days-man between us, who may lay his hand upon us both.* The Lord Jeſus Chriſt in coming down upon earth, proves himſelf to be *form'd out of the clay*, a true repreſentation of one party, he was *made lower than the Angels for the ſuffering of death.* But now, in his *going to the Father*, we are convinc'd that what he did was the *righteouſneſs* in which his people are found, that the *ſword of God* has been directed *againſt the man who is his fellow.* *He knew that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God.*

Zech. xiii. 7.

Joh. xiii. 3.

It's only in this view that an awaken'd conſcience can have peace. The Spirit, after he has unſettled the ſinner, and put him by his other dependencies, ſhews him a merit that will do; that, tho' Chriſt is in the form of a ſervant, he *thinks it no robbery to be equal with God.* The ſoul regards him as JEHOVAH *our righteouſneſs.* Deſtroy that title, and our comfort in him gives way. When he invites *the ends of the earth to look unto him that they may be ſaved*, he gives this reaſon for the call,

Jer. xxiii. 6.

Iſa. xlv. 22.

this

SERM. XIX. this ground for their hope, that *he is the Lord, and there is none else*. And when the believer gives out the confidence that he has in him, 'tis still upon
ver. 24. this bottom: *In the Lord shall one say I have righteousness and strength; to him shall men come, and in him shall the seed of Israel be justified.*

Indeed the name of *Lord*, as well as that of God, is scatter'd among the creatures: *There are Gods many, and Lords many*; but when it is us'd with the highest attributes, when the greatest things are affirm'd of him that has it, the sense is determin'd. If we read of a Lord that gives us food and raiment, and protects us in our way, perhaps there is no necessity to understand so much by it: but the Lord, in whom we have *righteousness*, to appear in the presence of eternal Justice; the Lord, by whom we have *strength*, to encounter Satan, to go forth conquering, and to conquer; he by whom *all the seed of Israel* in every country, people, tongue, and nation, in every age of the world, are to be justified and to glory, must be the Lord, besides whom there is none else; for he that glories is *to glory in the Lord.*

It is suppos'd that He who undertook our redemption was in this respect equal to the design,
Heb. i. 3. because *being the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his Person, after he had by himself purg'd away our sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.* There are four things to be observ'd in the gradation of that sentence.

First, That it was not every one who could enter into the design: he that does it must be *the brightness of the Father's glory*, and the express image of his Person. It was necessary he should have such a dignity in himself, or otherwise he had fallen beneath the undertaking. If he was not all this, it signified nothing what he could *do*.

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Secondly, It was this perſonal merit that made the atonement. *By himſelf* he purged away our ſins; not only as he made an offering of himſelf, but his own virtue convey'd a value to thoſe ſufferings, and made 'em effectual.

Thirdly, 'Tis from both theſe conſiderations that he takes his place at the right hand of God. He could not have gone thither, had he not been the brightneſs of his glory: and therefore tho' the expreſſion of ſitting at the right hand does ſometimes ſignify the happineſs of a creature, what believers are capable of, 'tis plain that cannot be the meaning here. For Chriſt's taking that place is put upon the dignity of his perſon, that he was equal to the Father; and *in that character*, as ſoon as he had done his work on earth, he went up to heaven. And therefore,

Fourthly, This muſt ſignify that in him which cannot be given to a creature, becauſe the reaſons for it are peculiar to himſelf; and it's underſtood in ſuch a ſenſe, as makes it incommunicable; *For to which of the Angels ſaid he at any time, Sit thou at my right hand?* ver. 5.

4. The Spirit leads us to Chriſt as the giver of what we want. They are *his people* whom he *makes willing*; they worſhip *him in the beauties of holineſs*. *He is the author and finiſher of faith.* He has promis'd to be *with us to the end of the world.* This cannot be underſtood of his human nature; for *the heavens have receiv'd that till the time of the reſtitution of all things.* And therefore when he tells the Diſciples, *Yet a little while, and ye ſee me no more; and again, yet a little while, and ye ſhall ſee me;* it muſt be underſtood of two different natures; unleſs we will daſh upon a contradiction, and make one part of the ſentence deſtroy the other. They were to ſee and know him *no more after the fleſh*; whither he went they could not come: and yet *he would ſee* Pſal. cx. 3. Heb. xii. 2. Matth. xxviii. 20. Acts iii. 21. 2 Cor. v. 16.

'em

SERM. XIX. *'em again, and not leave 'em comfortleſs.* Nay, he tells 'em, that his preſence with 'em would be vital; ſufficient to all the purpoſes of duty, and a full ſecurity of happineſs; *becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo.* There was to be a communication, a vein of influence reaching from heaven to earth; a life from *him* ſtreaming down to *them.*

John xiv. 18. ver. 19.

And what apprehenſions muſt we have of him, who is the fountain of ſuch an exiſtence? Who muſt he be that makes us live over again, that gives us a *part in the firſt reſurrection?* How ſhall we find a harmony between what he ſaith to the Father, and this that he tells the Diſciples? To the Father he profeſſes, *I am no more in the world; but theſe are in the world, and I come to thee*; and yet to his people he has promis'd, *Wherever two or three are met in my name, I am in the midſt of 'em.* The council at *Jeruſalem* took knowledge of the Apoſtles, that *they had been with Jeſus:* How could that be, when he was in heaven, and they on earth? They muſt mean, either that their having been formerly with him had left impreſſions behind; or rather, that they were ſtruck with a ſenſe of ſome new converſation; they took knowledge that they had been with Jeſus. Now who is it that could be both in heaven and earth, but he who had ſaid of himſelf to *Nicodemus,* that *no man had aſcended up into heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, who was then in heaven.*

John xvii. 11. Matt. xviii. 20. Acts iv. 13. John iii. 13.

All religion is the work of a God. A convert is *born, not of fleſh, nor of the will of man, nor of blood, but of God.* The author of every good and perfect gift is the *Father of lights, of his own will does he beget us by the word of truth.* And therefore, if we have our dependence upon Chriſt for theſe things, the Spirit, in leading us to him, tells us what he *is.* The Apoſtle numbers the ſteps by which he went up to his glory: firſt, that he was rais'd

i. 14. Jam. i. 17, 18.

rais'd by *the working of a mighty power*; then, *set at the right hand of God, Angels, and principalities, and dominions being made subject to him*; and then, appointed to be *head over all things unto the church.* Now how can he be equal to this relation, if he is no more than a creature? For *the church is his body*, which he not only guides, but animates. He is the head, from which an influence comes that exceeds all the courses of nature, and therefore he must have *the fulness of him, who fills all in all.* As the consequence and argument of such a capacity, he *quickens those who are dead in trespasses and sins.* This quickening is the same with *working faith in 'em*, and that was by such *an exceeding greatness of his power*, as could be equal'd by nothing but his own resurrection. Now, who is it that *quickens the dead, and calls the things that are not as tho' they were?* This act of conversion is all along made to be as great as a resurrection; and therefore if a Divine power is necessary for the one, it must be so for the other.

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Eph. i. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.

ch. ii. 1.

Rom. iv. 17.

Abraham's faith was acting a great part, when he believ'd in God that raises the dead. And what must the Spirit teach us to think of a Redeemer, when we are led to him as the author of grace? when he puts us into a state of perpetual derivation from him, that the whole body being thus maintain'd, may *encrease with the encrease of God?* Can this be, if they do not encrease with the gifts of a God? 'Tis for this reason that the words are us'd promiscuously; sometimes we are said to be *call'd of God*, and sometimes *preserv'd in Christ Jesus, and called.* We are *the workmanship of God*, and yet are *created anew in Christ Jesus.* Our religion is a renewal of us into the image of him that created us. *God dwells in us, and we in him*, saith the Apostle *John: I will be in you, and you in me*, saith Christ himself. The Spirit of *God* and the Spirit of *Christ*

Jude 1.

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are ſpoke of under the ſame attributes. The ſcripture uſes either of the expreſſions as meaning but one thing. And can we think that a creature muſt have his name us'd in common with God, who is at an infinite diſtance from every work of his hand, whatever glory he has imparted to it? Why ſhould the Apoſtle talk in the ſame breath of two ſuch diſtant natures, and obſerve no guard or modeſty in his tranſition from the one to the other?

Rom. viii. 9, 10, 11. *Ye are not in the fleſh, but in the Spirit, if ſo be that the Spirit of* GOD *dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of* CHRIST, *he is none of his; and if* CHRIST *be in you, the body is dead, becauſe of ſin; but the Spirit is life becauſe of righteouſneſs. And if the Spirit of* HIM *who raiſed up Chriſt from the dead dwell in you,* HE *that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead ſhall quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

5. The Spirit leads us to Chriſt, as one that can

Acts iv. 12 anſwer all our dependence upon him. *There is no ſalvation in another, nor any other name given under heaven among men, whereby we ſhall be ſaved.* After the ſoul is quicken'd, we are to live upon him.

Phil. i. 6. The ſame hand that *begun the good work* is to carry it on and *perform* it. As we ſay that Providence is a continued creation, ſo the preſerving of our faith and hope and love is the work of him who implanted 'em. He is the *author*, and we look to him as the *finiſher*, of our faith.

And who can this be but the Almighty? The Apoſtle tells us, that no leſs than a Divine Nature can ſecure ſalvation to the humane. See how things are join'd together, and how little room there is for any unglorious diſtinction between *him*

2 Theſſ. ii. 11, 12. *that ſits on the throne and the Lamb. We pray for you,* ſaith he, *that our God would count you worthy of his calling, and fulfill all the good pleaſure of his goodneſs, and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt may be glorified in you,*

and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. SERM. XIX.

There is a great deal of pains taken to shew that the Scripture has never attributed the work of creation to a Redeemer; and there must be a great deal more before they are able to cast a cloud upon the evidence we have for it. But if there is any doubt about *that*, here's a much greater work, and which is apparently Divine, that claims Him as an Author. And would that God, whose name is *Jealous*, suffer those actions that are his chief glory to be mention'd as belonging to a creature? Certainly *he that has wrought us for the self-same thing is God.* 2 Cor. v. 5. Our preservation is ascribed to a Redeemer, and yet we can depend upon no less than *the grace of God*, that shall keep us *thro' faith unto salvation.* 1 Pet. i. 5. Our Saviour begs, *Father, keep thro' thine own name those whom thou hast given me.* John xvii. 11. And yet this is the very thing that he promises upon the foundation of his own authority; *They are my sheep, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck 'em out of my hand.* Ch. x. 28, 29, 30. And tho' he adds, *My Father who gave 'em me is greater than all, and none shall pluck 'em out of my Father's hand;* yet he does not say this to contradict his own equality with God: He immediately retrieves what some people desire should be lost, that *he and his Father are one:* And if he did not mean by it what the words do plainly import, there was no occasion for the *Jews* to *take up stones*, and charge ver. 33. him with *blasphemy, because that he being a man had made himself God.* For tho' he tells 'em that some in their law were call'd *Gods*, yet he distinguish'd himself from them: they were people *to whom the word of God came*, creatures, subjects, and dependents; but he was *sanctified, and sent into the world.* 35, 36. He does not claim the title by virtue of an office, but saith, *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.* 37. It was not for doing any good works,

SERM. XIX. that their Kings were called *Gods*, but merely on the account of their station; but he avows himself to be a God, as doing *the works of the Father*. Not because the Father had appointed 'em, for that every good man, and especially every prophet, might have said; but such as none but the Father could
38. do: *Tho' ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe*, What? that he is commission'd and sent into the world? No; but that *he is in the Father, and the Father in him.*

Thus the Spirit leads us to a dependence upon him, for that which none but a God can do. *We*
Jude 21. *look for the mercy of the Lord Jesus unto eternal life.*
Psal. lxii. Now it's certain, *power belongs unto God, also unto*
11, 12. *him belongs mercy*; and *the gift of God is eternal life.*
Rom. vi. And therefore when he had directed us to look to
22. Christ, he concludes with a doxology that tells us
Jude 24, who he is; *Now unto him that is able to keep us from*
25. *falling, and to present us faultless before his glory with exceeding joy* (these works are frequently attributed
Eph. v. 27. to Christ, he will *present the Church to himself*; and yet he who is capable of doing this is) *the only wise God our Saviour, to whom be glory, majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, Amen.*

6. The Spirit leads us to him, as one entitled to
Revel. iii. all the glory of another world. *I overcame*, saith
21. he, *and am sat down with my Father upon his throne.* He shall glorify me; for he shall take of mine, and shew it unto you. ALL *that the Father has is mine, and therefore I said he shall take of mine: q. d.* I speak of that fulness that I have equally with the Father.
Eph. iv. 10. He went up *far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.* This is not speaking of him as a creature. What shuffling and mingling of senses is there, when we talk of the worship that was given him on earth! and yet the Scripture makes no difference between what is paid to the Father and to him in
Rev. v. 13. heaven. Can *every creature in heaven, and on earth,*

and

and under the earth, and in the sea, do any more than say, *Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be to him that sits on the throne?* and yet the same do they ascribe *unto the Lamb for ever.* Is there any more in the first part of the song of *Moses* and the Lamb, *Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty,* than there is in the last, *Just and true are all thy ways, thou King of Saints?* Thus he that is justified in the Spirit appears to be God; but nevertheless this is a MYSTERY *that man's wisdom teaches not.*

SERM. XIX.

xv. 3.

SERMON XX.

V. THIS, as well as the former branch of our religion, comes within the character that's given of the whole, that it is *a mystery of godliness*; which I shall consider in both the parts of it: First, shew that it is a *mystery*, and only to be understood by the light that comes from above; and secondly, that it prepares and leads to *godliness*; it animates and guides our practice, and helps us to *do* God's *will*, as well as to receive his *word*.

SERM. XX. Jan. 18th, 1718-19.

1. 'Tis a thing MYSTERIOUS in its own nature, that he who was manifest in the flesh should be *justified in the Spirit*. There's a great deal that humane reason will have to object against it; nor can it be known any other way, than by the revelation that God has given us in his word. From those writings alone shall I endeavour to lay it before you; for, I am sure, *that book* is our only rule, in

SERM. XX. following the work of the Spirit upon the souls of men: the descriptions we meet with in the Bible have their counterpart in the experience of a believer. *You obey from the heart the form of doctrine, εἰς ὃν παρεδόθητε, into which you are deliver'd.* Rom. vi. 17.

Now that the great Saviour of the world should be *justified in the Spirit* is a *mystery*, as you will see by the consideration of these particulars. 1. 'Tis strange, that he should *carry on* his design by dying, which seems to be the way of *losing* it. 2. 'Tis mysterious, that he should be *own'd* by the Father at the time that we thought him *forsaken*. 3 'Tis more a wonder, that the thing which seem'd to *hinder* the faith of men should afterwards *encourage* it. 4. 'Tis again a mystery, that he who appear'd at his death as if he was entirely in the enemies hands, should so soon after declare *his own power* at the resurrection. 5. The manner of the Spirit's justifying him in the soul that was fill'd with *prejudice* against him is very mysterious. 6. The success of this work in the heart of a believer, its *victory* over all opposition, and its *perseverance* to the end, makes another part of this wonder.

1. One testimony given to our blessed Lord was concerning his death; and you may look upon it as a mystery, that he should take such a way to carry on his design, as all mankind imagin'd would be fatal to it. *The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness*; and yet *the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men.* He appears as the captain of our salvation. As God laid help upon him, so we are told that *he is mighty to save.* Tho' he was promis'd as the *seed of the woman* in the early voice of the Gospel, to signify the weakness and frailty of the nature that he took upon him; yet it was then affirm'd, that he should *break the serpent's head.* And what could we expect from such a promise, but

1 Cor. i. 25.

Genes. iii. 15.

that

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that he would make the clouds his chariot, and come attended with the armies of heaven, that it might be said, as it us'd to be, *Honour and majesty are before him, strength and beauty are in his sanctuary?* That he should *put on righteousness as a breast-plate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head, the garments of vengeance for clothing, and be clad with zeal as a cloke?* Psal. xcvi. 6. Isa. lix. 17.

But when he became *in all things like unto his brethren*, it was, *that thro' death he might subdue him that has the power of death, that is, the devil; and so deliver them who thro' fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.* The rescue that he determin'd to give his people from their greatest enemy and their darkest fears, was noble, divine, and worthy of himself; but the *way* that he took to do it is what no wisdom of man would have found out: That falling by Satan should be triumphing over him, that losing his forces should be getting the battle, is a strange way of conquering. 'Tis said of the Devil, that *he had the power of death*; and if a Redeemer was stronger than he, we should have thought he would spoil his armour, and take from him that wherein he trusted, and let it be seen that he should no longer have the command of such an important evil: And therefore if, in this battel, he that undertook to deliver *us* should not be able to save *himself*, we could have nothing to admire in him but his good wishes, and bewail the miscarriage of a gracious purpose. Upon his own dying we must conclude, that he who had the power of death had obtain'd power over *him*; nor does he seem to deny it, as he saith to the *Jews, this is your hour, and the power of darkness*; i. e. now the combination of hell and earth against me will succeed. Heb. ii. 14, 15.

And yet by falling he conquer'd, by dying he liv'd, and gave success to the great design which

SERM. XX. his enemies thought was loſt: for, tho' *he was crucified thro' weakneſs, yet he lives by the power of God.* 'Tis thus that he deliver'd his people, not only from their real danger, but the terrible apprehenſions they have of it, that *fear of death thro' which they are all their life-time ſubject to bondage.* This he did by his own death. 'Tis ſtrange, that *his* dying under ſo much darkneſs and horror, ſhould be a means to make it eaſier for *us*; that, becauſe he cried after a departed God, and bore the weight of an avenging law, that therefore our fears ſhould be over; and yet *in this* he is juſtified by the Spirit. The ways he took to bring about the great ſalvation were rightly choſen, and effectual to all the benefits that he had in his view: *For this* Heb. ix. 15. *cauſe he is the Mediator of the new Teſtament, that by means of death they who are call'd may receive the promiſe of eternal inheritance.*

2. Tis a myſtery that he ſhould be own'd by the Father, at the ſame time that he thought himſelf forſaken: it us'd to ſupport him under all the John viii. 29. ſufferings of life, that *he who ſent him was with him, the Father had not left him alone.* So he could xvi. 32. tell his Diſciples, *The hour comes when ye ſhall be ſcatter'd every man to his own, and leave me alone; yet am I not alone, but the Father that ſent me is with me.* He could ſay over the grave of *Lazarus*, xi. 41. *I thank thee that thou haſt heard me, and I know that thou heareſt me always.* But this Divine Preſence, or at leaſt the delightful ſenſations that attended it, this that had been his perpetual ſecurity, was to fail him at laſt; and he who had ſo often profeſs'd his aſſurance of the Father's care, muſt cry out upon the croſs, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?*

The paſſage is taken out of the xxii[d] Pſalm, which is directed to the chief muſician upon *Aijeleth Shahar, i. e.* the hind of the morning; and

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it seems to bear this allusion, that the person whose miseries are there describ'd was like a chased hart, almost run down, gasping, fainting, without any dawn of help from the whole creation. Like a creature so deadrun does he represent his own case, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* The compellation is very moving: he pleads a propriety in God; he repeats it, My God, my God; *q. d.* I am certainly Thine, and more Thine than any one else can be, and yet Thou hast forsaken me. The Psalmist pursues the meditation: *Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry unto thee in the day-time, and thou heares not, and in the night season I am not silent.* As the lamentation stands here at large, we must take it for the anguish of his soul, under a sense of the Father's departure from him: and by the vehemence with which it is repeated, we may suppose it continu'd for some time.

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Psal. xxii. 1, 2.

And yet, *even then*, the Father did own him in the most effectual way: that is, he receiv'd the offering that Christ made of himself. He was then *a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour:* he had *a joy set before him:* there was a Divine influence upon every groan: *for thro' the eternal Spirit he offer'd himself without spot to God.* Here then is a mystery, that the Father should be present with him, when himself complains that he had forsaken him. Had God indeed withdrawn from him, and not accepted an offering at his hand, all those torments had been in vain, and the blood of the covenant prov'd no better than *an unholy thing.* But in the hour of his distress, when *it pleas'd the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief,* he was then the dearest to Divine Justice; as by those agonies he brought in a righteousness for his own glory, and our acceptance. He was then doing the most desirable service to the holiness of God, shedding a blood

Eph. v. 2. Heb. xii. 2. Heb. ix. 14. Isa. liii. 10.

SERM. XX. that ſhould purifie heaven itſelf, and make ready a numerous people to inhabit it: *The heavenly things themſelves were purified with this better ſacrifice*; and *thro' the blood of the everlaſting covenant was the great Shepherd of the ſheep brought again from the dead.*

Heb. ix. 23. xiii. 20.

3. Another myſtery is this, that the very thing which ſeem'd to hinder the faith of men, ſhould afterwards encourage it: I mean, the death of our bleſſed Lord. Whenever he ſpoke of this, tho' at a diſtance, there went off a great ſhoal of proſelytes; nay, the very twelve us'd to be ſhock'd at it. They rebuk'd him for it, they mourn'd over it, *ſorrow fill'd their hearts*, and became unweildy to 'em. When the time came on that he muſt be deliver'd up, they forſook him, and fled away. They could not endure the thoughts of the croſs: *All of 'em were offended becauſe of him that night; the Shepherd was ſmitten, and the ſheep of the flock ſcatter'd abroad.* And would not every one imagine that a circumſtance ſo frightful beforehand, ſhould be ſcandalous afterwards? that they would never allow themſelves to remember the vile way in which their Saviour died.

Joh. xvi. 6. Mat. xxvi. 31.

But, inſtead of that, they make no ſecret of it; they mention the ill uſage he had from the *Jews* with ſatisfaction: *The offence of the croſs had ceas'd.* 'Tis obſerv'd, that as he *ſhew'd 'em his hands and his feet, then were the Diſciples glad when they ſaw the Lord.* And tho' *Thomas* did not believe, yet his unbelief turns quite another way than it us'd to do. He is ſo far from being terrified with the thoughts of our Lord's dying upon the croſs, that he rather makes it a condition: *Except I ſee the print of the nails, and thruſt my fingers into his ſide, I will not believe.* And the reſt made no ſecret of it, that their *chief prieſts and rulers deliver'd him to be condemn'd to death.* Might it not have been

Joh. xx. 20. ver. 25.

been expected, that the *Jews* would give out that as a reproach to the whole party: These are the Disciples of him that was crucified, and insult their faith with the scandalous death of their master? And the people who were afraid to see him die, could not be the most prepar'd to stand this banter. But it prov'd quite otherwise with 'em: they own'd all this in their argument: *The God of our Fathers rais'd up Jesus, whom ye slew and hang'd on a tree.* Before this, their eyes were blinded; they could not see that such a form of death was describ'd in any of the Prophets: but it was no longer a stumbling-block to 'em after the resurrection, as *Paul* and *Barnabas* told the *Jews* at *Antioch: They that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew not him, nor yet the voices of the Prophets that are read every sabbath day, have fulfill'd them in condemning him: And tho' they found no cause of death in him, yet desir'd they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfill'd all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.* SERM. XX. Acts v. 30. xiii. 27, 28, 29.

This was so far from being the matter of their concern or shame, that the Apostle tells the *Corinthians, he determin'd to know nothing among 'em save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* And, as to his own practice, he durst not *glory in any thing but the cross of Christ, whereby the world was crucified to him, and he to the world.* This preaching of the cross was *to them that perish foolishness.* The *Jews* made it *a stumbling-block*, and the *Greeks* entertain'd it with contempt; but *to them that are saved, both Jews and Greeks, Christ*, as so crucified, was *the wisdom of God, and the power of God.* You will easily conceive, that when they us'd to tell mankind of a Redeemer who was capable of saving 'em, and gave 'em a long account of the miracles that he wrought, and especially when they themselves 1 Cor. ii. 2. Gal. vi. 14. 1 Cor. i. 24.

SERM. XX. selves did wonders in his name, it would raise the expectations of the people. But when they came to that part of the story, that this Almighty Lord was crucified, that he, who brings others to glory, fell himself with shame and torment, it could not fail to startle all that heard it. We should have thought that branch of the report had better have been left out.

But it was *this* that drew such vast numbers after him. *Nicodemus* was a Disciple of Jesus, but he durst not make a public profession. That which brought him first to our Lord, was the miracles that he wrought: *No man can do the things that thou dost, except God be with him.* Now, who could think that such a one should take courage at the death of Christ? and yet he comes with a great provision of sweet spices to anoint his body. Nay, *Joseph* of *Arimathea*, who was *a Disciple secretly for fear of the Jews*, begins to open his profession when we should have thought it was time to close it: *He went boldly to Pilate, and beg'd the body, and put it into his own new tomb.* The Scripture was indeed fulfill'd, that the Shepherd should be smitten, and the sheep scatter'd; and so they were for a time; but those fears gave way, and that little flock that us'd to run as far as they could from danger, now can meet it all. *They rejoic'd that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name, and daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ.*

Joh. iii. 2. xix. 38, 39. Acts v. 41, 42.

4. 'Tis still further a mystery that he who appear'd at his death, as if he was entirely in the enemies hands, should soon after declare *his own power* at the resurrection. They took him and hal'd him from one to another; from *Pilate* to *Herod*, and from *Herod* to *Pilate*. He is abus'd by the soldiers, insulted by the rabble, and pursu'd with

with a charge of capital crimes by the priests: they put upon him what vesture they please, and make a jest of his authority by the purple robe: they expose him by a crown of thorns; they lay upon him the whole weight of his cross, which was a burthen too heavy for him to bear: they nailed him to it, *they pierc'd his hands and his feet*; and it seems altogether at their own choice, whether they will break his bones or no. Tho' there was a secret design of God which protected him from that, yet it's more than they knew. They give him vinegar to drink, they open his side with a spear, and in short do what they please. Never did a Person seem to be less at his own disposal; *a worm, and no man. He is led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he open'd not his mouth.* They took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre, saith the Apostle, *i. e. Pilate* gave leave for *Joseph* to do it; and yet after this, he made it very evident they had no more to do with him. SERM. XX. Ps. xxii. 6. Isa. liii. 7.

Now, who could believe it of a Person so helpless and passive, that in the space of three days no guards could secure him? that He, who had never an Angel to protect him from death, should have their united assistance at the resurrection? *He loos'd the pains of death, it not being possible that he should be holden of it.* How is this conceivable of One that died? Why *could not* he lie in the grave, who had already suffer'd on the cross? Why must not that body *see corruption* which had felt the sorrows of death? We should have thought, that *preventing* those pains of death would have declar'd his Majesty more than *loosing* 'em afterwards. The *Jews* begun to mutter a peevish argument upon *Lazarus*'s death: *Why could not this man who open'd the eyes of the blind, have caus'd that even this man should not have died?* And such sort of thoughts Acts ii. 23. Joh. xi. 37.

are

SERM. XX. are apt to rise in the carnal mind: Why was there so very little of his power shewn before, and so much afterwards?

Now, the Spirit makes this mystery sit easie upon the believer: we are convinc'd, that such a forlorn and helpless way of dying, answer'd the great atonement, that he was to make; and that it became him, who was of the seed of *David* ac-
Rom. i. 4. cording to the flesh, to be *declared the Son of God with power, by the Spirit of holiness, in the resurrection from the dead.* It is evident from the whole, that the contrivance is all divine. We should never have laid matters together that way, but made his Majesty more uniform and continued. However, thus
Heb. ii. 10 *it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect thro' his sufferings.*

5. The manner of the Spirit's justifying Christ in a soul that was fill'd with prejudice against him, is very mysterious. The Apostle has observ'd with a great deal of justice, that by nature we are *children of wrath,* as appears by our having *a con-*
Eph. ii. 3. *versation among them, and fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, and of the mind.* These lusts of the mind are
2 Cor. x. 5. what he calls in another place *strong holds, and imaginations, and high thoughts, that exalt themselves against the knowledge of Christ.* Our Saviour intimates the difficulty of the case, when he saith,
Mat. xi. 6. *Blessed is he whoever shall not be offended in me.* He knew that as Satan was his enemy, so there was a great deal that he both might and would throw into the imaginations of the world. We may say,
Isa. liii. 1. *Who has believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* The carnal mind is most cer-
1 Cor. ii. 14. tainly *enmity against God,* and does not know the things of God; nay they are *foolishness to him, because they are spiritually discerned.* 'Tis no wonder,

der if our *Gospel be hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world blinds the eyes of them that believe not.* SERM. XX. 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

And what is it that gives the ministers of the word success, and makes 'em a savour of God in them that believe? I answer, *God makes us able ministers of the new Testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. Our sufficiency is of him;* but how shall we describe it? Is it not mysterious that all those reasonings which seem so very strong and clear, are gone as the morning cloud, and lick'd up as the early dew? and that, not in the way that we should have expected? Perhaps an unbeliever stands it out against the most powerful arguments; none of these can reach him, and yet at last he falls, as *Ahab* did, by a bow drawn at a venture, and an arrow that comes in at the joints of the harness, without any aim in him that shot it. iii. 6, 7.

Thus we have sometimes known, that a plain practical sermon has done more to convince a soul of reveal'd religion, than all the disputations that have been labour'd with art and zeal. You will seldom meet with an argument better turn'd than that which the poor man us'd when our Lord had given him his sight, and yet we do not find that it did any manner of good. When the Pharisees tell him, that this Jesus is *a sinner,* he puts by that blow, *Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.* Joh. ix. 24, 25. They rally him again: *We know that God spake to Moses, as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is:* And his answer is as short: *Herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he has open'd my eyes.* But notwithstanding the clearness of the argument, and the honest way that the poor man had of working it, there's never a Pharisee convinc'd, nor are his own parents ver. 29, 30.

persuaded;

SERM. XX. perſuaded; for the fear of excommunication makes 'em not dare tell a plain ſtory, how their ſon who was born blind came now to ſee.

And yet we find what a run the conviction had afterwards, when we ſhould have thought it was too late to expect any thing of that nature. At the day of Pentecoſt the Spirit is pour'd out. *Peter* explains that diſpenſation: tells 'em, that *Jeſus of*
Acts ii. 22. *Nazareth was a man approv'd of God among 'em, by ſigns, and miracles, and wonders that God did by him in the midſt of them, as they alſo knew.* He then goes on with an account of his reſurrection, and
ver. 36. concludes upon the whole, *Let all the houſe of Iſrael know aſſuredly, that this ſame Jeſus whom ye have crucified, has God made both Lord and Chriſt.* Now, tho' this is no more than what they might have been told ſeveral times, yet it's like the riſing of the ſun, all darkneſs flies before it. And the change begins in the conſcience. 'Twas not merely the removing of a miſtake, or an error, but they ſpeak of it as a practical matter; *They were*
ver. 37. *prick'd in their hearts, and ſaid to Peter, and the reſt of the Apoſtles, Men and brethren, what ſhall we do?* Thus the Spirit convinc'd 'em of *ſin*, becauſe they believ'd not in Chriſt. Theſe proſelytes are worth having; and if the work does not take hold here, it ſignifies nothing. There's a great deal of difference between a man's being able to prove the Divine Nature and credentials of a Meſſiah, and his coming to him as his own Saviour. That was the
ver. 41. caſe with theſe *Jews: they gladly receiv'd the word and were baptiz'd; and the ſame day there were added to 'em about three thouſand ſouls.*

And ſo it is in our day: there needs no more to remove the arguments that are brought againſt the chriſtian religion, than for people to be awaken'd into a concern about eternity. The complaint againſt the Apoſtles at *Philippi* was, *That theſe*

men

men being Jews, did exceedingly trouble the city; but when the jailor cries out, *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* they bid him *believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and he rejoyc'd, believing in God with all his house.* He that feels the corruption of his nature, and knows himself to be undone, will no longer make a jest of being found in the righteousness of another. The method of justification by faith may well be the contempt of those who know no danger from sin: it's like sending a physician to a man in health. But all the critical learning, the nice reasoning, the free ways of thinking, make room when conscience tells the soul that He who saves him is Jehovah our righteousness. It will be with them as it was with the Apostle, *The things that were gain to me, I found to be loss; yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffer'd the loss of all things, and do count 'em but dung that I may win Christ.* I do count 'em but σκύβαλα dogs-meat, fitter for them than for me: he had lost his taste and relish of that which he us'd to admire. This will be more evident from the next head.

SERM. XX. Acts xvi. 20. ver. 30, 31. Phil. iii. 7, 8.

6. The success of this work in the heart of a believer: When the Spirit has justified Christ in the manner I have told you, the conviction proclaims itself; it's like the sun that appears in its own evidence: *The God of hope fills 'em with all joy and hope in believing.* This is a mystery to the Christian himself, and may well be so to others. He knows not how to believe the very change that he feels. 'Tis like seed in the ground, which, *whilst the man sleeps and rises night and day, springs and grows up he knows not how.* Here's no force upon his will, and yet he feels something that is irresistible, a day of *God's power.* He is *drawn,* and yet he *runs.* Here's a necessity upon him, but

Rom. xv. 13. Mar. iv. 26, 27. Psal. xc. 3. Cant. i. 4.

SERM. XX. you must not say he is dragg'd along with it. He makes a free choice, he *would not* do otherwise, and yet in some sense, he *cannot* do otherwise.

How soon was the turn given to *Saul*? he cries
Acts ix. 5, 6. out, *Who art thou, Lord?* and presently after, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Here's no time taken to unravel the prejudice that was so entangled.
Gal. i. 14, 15, 16. He had *profited in the Jewish religion above many his equals in his own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of his Fathers: but when it pleas'd God to reveal his Son in him, that he might preach him among the Gentiles, he conferred not with flesh and blood.* We should have thought, there must have been a gradual recovery to shew him, here a little, and there a little, the mistake of his former arguments. He must see by degrees, that the Messiah was to come out of *Nazareth*, and not have an earthly power. Now, this is done all at once; all the lectures of the Pharisees are answer'd in a mo-
Acts ix. 21. ment: *They that heard him were amaz'd, and said, Is not this he who destroy'd them that call'd on this name at Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?* This remark they make upon his preaching straitway in the synagogues, that *Christ is the Son of God:* nay, the work was a mystery to the Disciples themselves, first at *Damascus*, and afterwards at *Jeru-*
Gal. i. 21, 22, 23, 24. *salem:* for, saith he, *I was unknown by face unto the churches at Judea that were in Christ, only they heard that he who persecuted us in times past, now preaches the faith that he once destroy'd, and they glorified God in me.*

You may take a short APPLICATION of what you have heard.

1. If the justification of Christ in the Spirit is such a mystery, it's no wonder that the honour of
1 Cor. xii. 3. our Lord is so much struck at: *No man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the holy Ghost.* And therefore

fore when we see men *do despite to the Spirit of grace*, when they take all the pains they can to stifle every thought of practical religion, when they represent the fears of persons about their own salvation as so many whims, and the comforts of the Spirit as a delusion; in a word, when they give up themselves to sensuality, and treat with scorn those that will not run to the same excess of riot, these are enemies to the holy Ghost, and in open war against him. And is it likely that he should teach those persons the *doctrines* of religion, who would never learn of him the *practice?* How should it be thought that a drunkard, a sabbath-breaker, or one that *wanders out of the way of understanding* is taught of God? Now, is it likely that men who live as without a God in the world, with no prayer in their families, no conversation with their Bibles, should be the best masters of argument about the deep mysteries of godliness? To suppose that God makes them wise, is to suppose that he steps out of his way, and works without the use of means, that he imparts of his treasures to an enemy, and furnishes a weapon against himself: no, he rather gives over those, that *do not like to retain him in their knowledge, to a reprobate mind. To the unbelieving nothing is pure, but the mind and conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but in works deny him, being abominable, disobedient, and to every good work reprobate.* When persons are more in *Saul*'s first inquiry, *Who art thou, Lord?* than in the second, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* there's not much to be expected from such as these; and to imagine that the truth is in their souls, is to suppose that God throws his pearls into a dunghil. We are told of *mockers who walk after their own ungodly lusts; These be they that separate themselves, sensual, and having not the Spirit.*

SERM. XX.

Rom. i. 28.

Tit. i. 15, 16.

Jude 18, 19.

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2. This shews us how vain all the ways of promoting the knowledge of Christ will be that are not agreeable to the Spirit. We may see how little can be expected in defence of the Doctrine from a party of men, who have done all they could to abuse the work of the Spirit both in the ordinances of the Gospel, and the souls of believers. Tho' *praying by the Spirit* is so often mention'd in Scripture, yet the language is become a jest, and a man will be laught at if he does but name it: and this not only by a noisy multitude, but such as pretend to know better. And are these the men from whom we are to have the truth as it is in Jesus? who have set up their own fancies above the divine institutions, and lay as great a weight upon an opinion that never was reveal'd, as they can upon that which is? of which we have a notorious instance in an author, who in his book against the *Deists,* proves that Jesus must be the Messiah from the miracles that he wrought, and that these were done in a public way, and that our evidence of this is by a succession of Bishops from the Apostles; which is laying the most important affair upon the greatest uncertainty in the world.

Feb. 1. 1718-19.

SERMON XXI.

2. THIS branch of our religion is proper to animate the whole duty of life. When he who was manifest in the flesh is justified in the Spirit, when God reveals his Son in us as an all-sufficient

Saviour, it does not only fill us with a holy wonder, but it makes us abound in the work of the Lord: *We follow after, that we may apprehend that for which we are apprehended of Christ Jesus.* SERM. XXI. Phil. iii. 12.

You will see that it is *a mystery of* GODLINESS, by considering the influence it has upon the following principles: Our reverence to God, our care to please him, the humble thoughts we should have of ourselves, our charity to others, the peace and hope that runs thro' our lives, and our preparation for a dying hour. These are the chief articles of practical piety, and whatever promotes them must be of the best importance. Now, you will find that the testimony which the holy Spirit gives in our souls to the character, the capacity and goodness of a Redeemer, will do us service in all the variety that I have mention'd.

1. By this we learn to approach with reverence to him with whom we have to do. This is a tribute to God's majesty; but yet it has the best directions from his goodness: nor can it be maintain'd without some hopes of an interest in him, and a conviction of *the forgiveness* and mercy that is *with him*. The Devils have it not: they behold and feel his greatness, and *the power of his anger; for according to his fear, so is his wrath;* but this is no devotional temper. Tho' they *believe and tremble*, they cannot come before him with the spirit of sons: and therefore the fear, that the people of God are conducted by, is distinguish'd from theirs. 'Tis call'd *a godly fear;* and the ground upon which it is rais'd is a covenant where the Devils have no lot or portion: *We, having receiv'd a kingdom that cannot be mov'd, have grace to serve God acceptably with reverence and a godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire.* Where you find by the turn of the argument, that tho' the religion of a good man falls under the influence of God's Majesty,

Ps. cxxx. 4. xc. 11. Jam. ii. 29. Heb. xii. 28, 29.

SERM. XXI. jesty, and looks upon him *as a consuming fire*, yet at the same time it is enliven'd by the thoughts of what his mercy has done in and thro' a Redeemer. Heb. iv. 13, 14. Thus the Apostle argues, that *all things are naked, and open'd to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Seeing then that we have a great high Priest that is pass'd into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.* When the holy Spirit does his office in glorifying the Son, by taking of *his*, and shewing them unto us, he commands every loose and idle thought. This being the King who sits upon the holy hill of *Sion*, we are to Psal. ii. 6, 11. *serve him with fear, and rejoyce with trembling.*

Tho' 'tis a common objection against the doctrine of free grace, that it teaches people an unbecoming boldness to their Maker; yet I believe the experience of every Christian tells him quite the contrary. *There's forgiveness with thee*, saith the Psalmist, *that thou may'st be feared.* God never appear'd so great to his soul, as when the view was taken under that character: *With the Lord there is mercy, and with our God is plenteous redemption.* So it is promis'd, when a Redeemer comes to be better Hos. iii. 5. known, that *the children of Israel should seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and they shall fear the Lord, and his goodness in the latter days.* 'Tis apparent to all observation, that they who are *stran-* Eph. ii. 12. *gers to the commonwealth of Israel, and aliens to the covenant of promise, who have no hope*, are persons that live as *without a God in the world.*

Now, the reverence that fills our minds to Him whose we are, and whom we serve, comes by faith 1 Pet. i. 17, 18, 19. in a Saviour: *We call on the Father, who without respect of persons judges according to every man's work, and so pass the time of our sojourning here in fear: Forasmuch as we know that our redemption is by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot.* You see in what method the

work goes on, *Psal.* lxxxix. 1. *I will sing of the faithfulness of the Lord: I said mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness hast thou established in the very heavens:* and from hence they conclude, that *great fear is due to the Lord in the assembly of his Saints, and he is to be had in reverence of those that are about him.* SERM. XXI. ver. 2. ver. 7.

How different was the temper of *Saul*, after Christ had reveal'd himself to him, from what it had been before? and yet, he never liv'd loose from all professions of duty, as you may safely imagine, because he was blameless touching the righteousness that is in the law. But when he found the necessity of looking to God in and thro' a Redeemer, he stood *trembling and astonish'd:* his heart was more bow'd to the divine will than ever it had been. And indeed there are no discoveries in which the greatness of a God does more appear than those that belong to our salvation. When *Isaiah* saw the glory of a Redeemer, and spake of him, as *sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, with his train filling the temple; the house was clouded with smoke, the posts of the door shake at the voice of him that spake.* And the prophet himself, who must be glad at the vision, (yet he) is bore down with the magnificence of the mercy, and cries out, *Woe is me, for I am undone!* He cries out undone at the sight of that which sav'd him. 'Tis not the language of despair: the only meaning of the words is, that the glory of the design was too much for him. There was something so great in this revelation of the Divine mercy, that makes him more apprehensive than he ever had been, that he was *a man of unclean lips.* What was it that he saw of a Saviour then? for the Evangelist tells us, that *he saw* HIS *glory, and spake of* HIM. Under what title? that which belongs to none but the most High, *the King, the Lord of Hosts.* Acts ix. 6. Isa. vi. 1, 2, 5. Joh. xii. 41.

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And so it will be with us. We cannot believe the sufficiency of a Mediator to save us, but at that very moment we are astonish'd at his perfec-

Ps. lxxxix. 8. tions: *O Lord of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee, or to thy faithfulness round about thee?* As *Jacob* in his dream or vision saw *a ladder* that kept the correspondence open between earth and heaven, *the Lord* Redeemer was *at the top of it*, and tells him what concern'd his happiness rather than his devo-

Gen. xxviii. 12, 13. 15. tion: *I am the God of thy father, and will give thee the land whereon thou liest: I will be with thee in the way that thou goest, and will bring thee back in peace.* He is struck with the discovery, and feels other

ver. 16, 17. impressions besides those of joy: *How fearful is this place! Surely the Lord was in this place, and I knew it not: This is no other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.*

2. If God is justified in our spirits, it will fill us with a care to please him. 'Tis very hard for me to set those bounds that some people speak of between the duty that is owing to the Father, and that which is claim'd by the Son. If the one is only a creature, no brightness or perfection can make his distance from the other any less than infinite; and therefore he is by no means to have the homage that is due alone to the Divine Nature. Such a worship as that would be idolatry. May we not therefore look for plain distinctions to settle our carriage to the Father and the Son, that the Gospel may not betray us into that very crime that was so abominable under the Law? The God who is so jealous of his honour, and told his people that they should not bow down to *the likeness of any thing in heaven or earth, or under the earth*; that they should have *no other God before him*, has certainly left us under no snare, by any unguarded direction in the New Testament. One of the last orders there, is from the Angel who would not

suffer

SERM. XXI.

suffer the Apostle to fall down before him, but bids him *worship God.*

Rev. xxii. 9.

Sometimes indeed God joins himself with another, and tells us, in the same word, of the duty that we owe to both; but there the case is so plain, that we are in no danger of mistaking. As when it is said, the children of *Israel believed the Lord and his servant Moses*, we must of necessity understand it of a different faith. So when *David* saith to *Abigail, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who sent thee this day to meet me; and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou.* Tho' he uses the same word in all the three parts of his declaration, yet it cannot possibly be taken in less than three senses. So again, when we are bid to *fear the Lord and the king*, can any mortal suppose it is with the same fear? Indeed I should not have mention'd this text as an instance, because it has suffer'd by the blasphemous cant of mercenary tongues, who have made a horrid prostitution of their ministerial character. The Apostle saith of the *Macedonians*, that they *gave up themselves to the Lord, and to us by the will of God.* The expression must have two meanings. In these places, and several others, the same word is to be taken in various senses.

Exod. xiv. 21. 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33. Prov. xxiv. 21. 2 Cor. viii. 5.

But this will by no means be our protection from running into idolatry, if he who was manifest in the flesh is *not God over all blessed for evermore.* The Scripture has not done as the Angel did at Mount *Sinai*, set guards about the Divine honour: He is all along represented as partner in it: *You believe in God, believe also in me.* I don't deny but a minister, a good man, and especially an Angel, may use those words, that if ye believe in God, believe that I am sent by him: but can any serious person think, that when Christ said it to his drooping disciples, that it meant no more as it came out of his mouth, than it would out of theirs?

Joh. xiv. 1.

He

SERM. XXI. He brings it in as an argument, that their *hearts should not be troubled.*

Joh. v. 23. And so, that passage, *That all men may honour the Son as they honour the Father, he that honours not the Son, honours not the Father who has sent him.* 'Tis a very short answer that the word AS does not signifie equality; for which we have this instance given, *As my Father has sent me, so send I you:* for according to that interpretation, Christ then saith no more of himself than what any preacher or believer upon earth may say, That all men are to honour a minister who comes in the name of God, *as* they honour the Father that sent him; and he that honours the one, honours the other. Tho' the words may be twin'd and bended into a good humble sense, yet how do you imagine they would sound? Can the phrase of honouring the Son *as* we honour the Father, mean no more than a similitude, as it may do if applied to an Angel or a man? Are we to take the word in this place as we do in others? How comes that then to be given as the reason of it, that *as the Father raises up the dead, and quickens 'em, so the Son quickens whom he will: That the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all men should honour the Son as they honour the Father?* Can any one imagine, that the manner of the expression is the same here, with that which it is compar'd to: *As the Father sends me, so send I you?* If we are not to take the phrase in this full sense in one place, because it *may* be taken in a lower sense in another, there is not any proposition that we can prove out of the Bible: *Except we utter by the tongue words easie to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken, for we shall speak into the air?*

ver. 21, 22.

1 Cor. xiv. 9.

If I may be allow'd to expound these Scriptures that give us the titles of the Father, in the way that

that is us'd with those that lay down the very same words of the Son, we shall not have one text left to prove a God at all. As for example, when we read of our Mediator, that he is call'd *the mighty God*, the force of the argument is taken off with this, that the name *may* be given to a creature. Why may not an Atheist use the same liberty with one text, as these do with another, and tell us as roundly, that those words, *Psal.* l. *The mighty God, even the Lord has spoken and call'd the earth from the rising of the Sun*, are to be understood of a king or an Angel? And farther, when it is said of Christ, that he shall be call'd *the everlasting Father*, and that *his goings forth have been of old from everlasting*, may you not put the same unglorious limitations upon the title that is given to God, when he is said to be *the ancient of days*? 'Tis true, the word everlasting is us'd of creatures, and there it must be taken in a narrower sense. But if that is the reason why it is to be so understood when applied to Christ, another sett of people may with the same assurance say that it means no more when we read that *from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God.*

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Isa. ix. 6.

Mic. v. 2.

Dan. vii. 13.

Ps. xc. 2.

What ground have we to imagine when the Apostle saith, *I am not without law to God, but under the law to Christ*, that we are to distinguish upon his words, as we do between fearing God and the king? At his conversion he cries out, *Who art thou, Lord?* And when he knew it was no other than Jesus of *Nazareth*, he nevertheless enquires of him, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* and yet it is certain, that he worship'd no other than *the God of his fathers*. He tells us, that *whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether therefore we live or die we are the Lord's.* What Lord is this? You will see in the next words; *For to this end Christ both died,*

1 Cor. ix. 21.

Acts xxiv. 14.

Rom. xiv. 8.

ver. 9, 10, and 11, 12.

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and rose, and reviv'd, that HE *might be the Lord both of dead and living.* And, *We must all stand before the judgment seat of* CHRIST, *because it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to* ME, *and every tongue shall confess to* GOD; *so then every one of us shall give an account of himself to* GOD.

Will it not be very hard for an honest humble Christian, who has had no education, or opportunity to be master of critical learning, (I say, will it not be hard upon him) to read exactly the same things demanded by the Father and the Son, and be told that one of 'em is but a creature? He thinks it is his God that speaks: *Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will hear thee.* The same Lord upon whom *men began to call* so long ago. Now, what way can such a one have to divest the word of the same sense, when he reads of people in *every place calling upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours?* So when we are told, that *he that is call'd in the Lord, being a servant, is the* LORD'S *freeman, likewise he that is call'd being free, is* CHRIST'S *servant.* It may be answer'd, that this is a profession we make to creatures, and a relation that we come into with men. Well, its true; but one would imagine, that tho' the word is so us'd in other places, it cannot be in this, because the very next verse gives a reason for it: *Ye are bought with a price, be ye not servants of men:* and therefore we are *Christ's servants,* in a way that we cannot be theirs. I durst not say as *David* did to any other than God, *Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant.* Thus does the Spirit justifie him who was manifest in the flesh; he fills us with a desire to please him: we are his people, and are made *willing* in the day of his power: *We worship Him in the beauty of holiness: He is your Lord, and therefore worship you him.*

Psal. l. 15. Gen. iv. ult. 1 Cor. i. 2. vii. 22. ver. 23. Psal. xcvi. 16. Ps. xc. 4. Ps. xlv. 11.

3. This

3. This gives us humble thoughts of ourſelves. Nothing ſhews the vileneſs of humane nature ſo much as the diſpenſation of the Goſpel: *Boaſting is excluded, not by the law of works, but by the law of faith. The excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus our Lord,* makes the principles we us'd to value no more than *loſs,* and no better than *dung.* The dearer Chriſt is to my ſoul, the viler ſhall I be to myſelf. Thus the Apoſtle after he was illuminated tells us, he was *not meet* to be call'd by that name: That *to him, who was leſs than the leaſt of all Saints, was this grace given that he ſhould preach the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, and to make all men ſee what is the fellowſhip of the myſtery that from the beginning of the world has been hid in God.* As you heard under the former head, the prophet cries out undone: Why? becauſe he was *a man of unclean lips, and dwelt in the midſt of a people of unclean lips.* Did he never feel that conviction before? yes ſurely; but it never came with that power upon his mind as when he ſtood in the contemplation of a Saviour. And it was the glory of his Perſon, as well as the deſign of his grace and love, that had made this impreſſion: *Mine eyes have ſeen the King, the Lord of hoſts.* He ſpeaks of him under the ſame title that *David* gave him: *I will write of things touching the King.*

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Rom. iii. 27. Phil. iii. 8. 1 Cor. xv. 8, 9. Eph. iii. 8, 9. Pſ. xlv. 1.

'Tis true, the mere name proves no divinity, becauſe it is given to creatures; but the queſtion is, whether it can be underſtood of any leſs than a God here; for it is ſaid of him, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* The church is conſider'd as his ſpouſe: *The King ſhall greatly deſire thy beauty, for he is thy Lord, and worſhip thou him.* And within the compaſs of two verſes, they are call'd *the King's daughter;* of whom nevertheleſs it is ſaid, *ſhe ſhall be brought unto the King.* Why is the ſame title given promiſcuouſly to the Father and the Son,

ver. 6. ver. 11.

SERM XXI. Son, if we may not have it expounded here, as it is in other places, that *God is King of all the earth, and a great King above all Gods.* *Isaiah* was humbled in his own eyes, when he saw him in that glory. 'Tis of him they speak in those words, *The King's strength loves judgment, and in the song of the Lamb, just and true are all thy ways, thou King of saints.*

xlvii. 7. xcv. 3. Ps. xcix. 4.

4. This inspires us with charity to others. That's one fruit of the humility I mentioned under the former head; for *only by pride comes contention, but with the lowly advis'd is wisdom.* Whether Christ is reveal'd in us or no, will appear as much in our temper as it does in our principles. A person may have clear notions about the Scripture doctrine, and a happy way of bringing 'em into light; but if he feels any thing of this upon his own soul, it will keep him from passion as much as it can do from error. A man that wrangles and behaves himself unseemly, may have the right of the argument; he may prove that *God was manifest in the flesh;* but such an one is no instance that ever he was *justified in the Spirit.* Whatever sentiments he has about the sufficiency of Christ's righteousness and the necessity of depending upon it, yet either he has had no experience of these things, or he has forgot it all. *If these things be in you and abound, you will neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; but he that lacketh these things, is blind, and cannot see far off, and hath forgotten that he was purg'd from his old sins.*

2 Pet. i. 8, 9.

I may look upon the person who denies the divinity of Christ to be in a mistake, and give him my reasons why I cannot come into his exposition of several Scriptures; but if I have felt *the power of that resurrection* for which I'm pleading, and *the fellowship of those sufferings* which I defend with my arguments,

arguments, and am *conform'd to that death* which I proclaim abroad, it will govern my temper, as well as direct my notions. I have reason to suspect whether my wisdom is *pure*, if it does not make me *peaceable, gentle, and easie to be intreated.* When orthodoxy puts us upon reviling language and cruel imprecations, we are only foaming out our own shame. There is nothing in truth that should make us behave our selves unseemly: If we cannot *in meekness instruct those that oppose themselves*, upon a peradventure, *that God may give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth*, we are not fit to be the *servants of the Lord.* Roughness and incivility is *one* way of answering a heretick, but it will tempt all mankind to think that we have got *no other.* I do not say, and I never thought it, that in the present awful controversy, which issues in no less than either denying the Lord that bought us, or worshipping and serving the creature equally with the Creator, that passion lay on one side of the question, and meekness on the other.

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Jam. iii. 17.

2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.

Knowledge puffs up, says the Apostle, even a knowledge of the truth; but if we have any experience upon our souls of what we are pleading for, it will have a great command over us. An awaken'd conscience will put you upon contending earnestly for the truth as it is in Jesus; but it will teach you at the same time to be *gentle towards all men.* Scolding is an evidence that a person comes rather for the plunder of the war, than the success of the cause.

Not that a peaceable temper makes us indifferent to the doctrines of the Gospel, no, far from it. I will suppose the case of an enlighten'd convert, that he approaches to Christ as the *God whose throne is for ever and ever*; that he depends upon him as having *brought in an everlasting righteousness*, and that he derives from him as *the King of saints.* These

are

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are notions and principles that he will by no means part with; he finds his soul drawn out into the highest degrees of reverence to a Saviour. If his confidence is in Christ Jesus, 'tis from a belief that he is the God whom *all the ends of the earth shall look to*; and if he is not God, the person is not only in an error, but he is struck off from his dependence, he dare not rely on him as the author and finisher of his faith. Now if such a one comes into the argument, 'tis no wonder that he is tenacious of those principles that enter into his best devotion, and are the support of his greatest hopes; but he is too full of the mystery, to be capable of wrangling about it; it's too much his concern for that; none but people who feel a great deal less than he does, can treat the subject in such a manner. If the zeal and learning of other persons are oppos'd to him, and would take him off from the truth that he has received with love, *he'll hold fast his profession;* though perhaps he may not be an equal master of argument with those who have listed themselves in the cause, and devoted their whole study for several years to this controversy; yet he knows from within, *in whom he has believed,* and will not part with those principles upon which he thinks him *able to keep what he has committed to him against that day.*

Isa. xlv. 2.

2 Tim. i. 12.

If I ever felt the power of Christ's resurrection, I can bear all the reproaches that we are like to meet with, and are flowing so fast upon us, on the account of our zeal for him. Of late we have been charg'd with *setting the Son above the Father,* which is an opinion I never so much as heard of, 'till I met with it in a printed accusation. And now we are laid under a new scandal, as being a people most inclin'd to persecution; and the principles that are suppos'd to lead us into it, are not those by which we have been distinguished, but what we have in common

Mr. *Emlyn's* works, p. 58.

common with the established Church. 'Tis not our scrupling ceremonies, or an inequality in the office of the ministry, but it's our adherence to the doctrine of my text, that has laid us under these new slanders. And *these are not enemies that have reproached us, then we could have born it; neither is it they who profes's'd to hate us, that have magnified themselves against us, then we could have hid our selves from them. But it is a man, a guide, an acquaintance, with whom we have taken sweet counsel, and walk'd to the house of God in company.* Our reproach is now *for the name of Christ.* SERM. XXI. Psal. lv. 12, 13, 14. 1 Pet. iv. 14.

If we do indeed maintain either this or any other cause with an ungodly rancour, it is wrong; the argument does not need it, and the Spirit of Christ will not bear it; *The wrath of man works not the righteousness of God.* But of this I'm sure, that there's no necessity of *speaking the truth* in any other way but that of *love*; and if ever any thing has dropt from my mouth unworthy of the charity which is the end of the commandment, I have done *that which I allow not:* For tho' there's none whom I more admire than Christ Jesus my Lord, yet there's nothing I more abhor than persecution in every form and shape: He needs none of my folly and corruption to promote his cause. The argument is certainly as good for *him* as it was for *Baal*; *if he be a God, he will plead for himself when one has cast down his altar.*

5. Another principle that the testimony of the Spirit has an influence upon, is that peace and hope that runs thro' the lives of believers. 'Tis in enmity to this, that Satan has rais'd such opposition to the doctrines of the Gospel. He grudges the Christian that serenity of mind which himself has lost. He would involve mankind in his own despair, and as *he is reserved in chains under darkness,*

SERM. XXI. he would have them be so too. To that purpose he takes all imaginable pains, either to prevent this work of the Spirit in our souls, or to divert us from heeding it.

And one way is the method of the present controversy, which is, to demand an *explication* of what we confess to be *mysterious:* That is the way to ensnare our faith, and entangle our peace: As for example, when I'm enquir'd of, whether the Three that bear record in heaven are three Modes, Operations, or infinite Minds, these are words which the Scripture has not given me, and therefore I have nothing to say to them. If the question is, whether they are *Three*, I can answer, yes; If I am ask'd whether they are three *Gods*, I must say, no: But how they are three, and how they are one, I do not pretend to tell. The ways of expression that people have shewn their fondness to, and by which they have endeavour'd to make it intelligible, have been only so many vain plots against the mysteriousness of the doctrine, and these have prov'd temporary as they deserv'd to do. Creeds have expir'd, grown old, and been ready to vanish away: They change as ages do, but *the faith once delivered to the saints* is the same. Thus far the believer is at a point, that he knows upon what his hope is rais'd. These are principles, which, though he cannot explain, yet they are what his soul flees to; and as ridiculous as a mysterious doctrine may appear to others, 'tis a foundation of hope to him. *His heart is comforted to the riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.*

Col. ii. 2.

6. It prepares him for a dying hour; he dare trust his soul to the care of a Redeemer at last. *Lord Jesus receive my Spirit.* He looks to him as

Acts vii. 59.

as the *finiſher* of this faith, and therefore his eſteem for him muſt be equal to ſo great a dependence in the moſt important act of religion. Thus Chriſt is juſtified in the Spirit, and the reputation he has in the heart of a believer, agrees to his glory above, where he is *ſeen of Angels.*

SERM. XXI.

March 1. 1718-19.

SERMON XXII.

1 Tim. III. 16.

——*Seen of Angels*——

SERM. XXII.

THIS is the third branch of a myſtery great without controverſy, and gives us a farther account of him who was *manifeſt in* the fleſh, and *juſtified in the Spirit*. That he is preach'd unto the Gentiles, and believed on in the world, ſhews us the empire that he has below; but his being ſeen of Angels is an argument of the glory that he is receiv'd into *above*. Theſe are the higheſt order of the creation, the *morning* ſtars; *the ſons of God* in a nobler ſenſe of the word than can be affirm'd of our nature; and it declares to us the value of this great ſalvation, that thoſe *thinking flames* ſhould feel any concern about it. There are three reaſons that would move us to ſuppoſe they had no lot or portion in this matter, and therefore

Job xxxviii. 7.

fore muſt no more regard it than they do the increaſe of the earth, the returns of ſpring and ſummer, and harveſt, and winter, which is nothing to them, who live in a ſtate of equal light and happineſs. SERM. XXII.

Firſt, They have always continu'd in the perfection and purity of their creation, and therefore had no need of any redemption from God, or any reconciliation to him. It could not be ſaid of them as it was of man, that the *Lord made 'em upright, but they ſought out many inventions*. *Secondly*, As the elect Angels never ſinned, ſo thoſe of that nature, who left their firſt habitation, were never to be ſaved; and therefore tho' the Son of God had a deſire to the works of his hands, yet it was not to any of *their number*. *Thirdly*, As an evidence of this, that they were diſtinguiſh'd out of the caſe, when He came upon the grand expedition of his love, *He verily took not on him the nature of Angels, but the ſeed of Abraham*. He declar'd, that his concern lay with thoſe children that were *partakers of fleſh and blood* by his own *taking part of the ſame*. He was (as no Angel ever had been) *made fleſh, and dwelt among us*. They are neither in our number, nor in our neighbourhood. They don't come into this world in the way that he did, as inhabitants: A ſpirit has no fleſh and bones, as the diſciples ſaw him to have. Eccleſ. vii. 29. Heb. ii. 16. Joh. i. 14.

And yet, tho' one would have thought theſe things might have carried off their regard from the work that he came about, and made 'em look upon the whole affair as what did not belong to them, you find their name is brought into this account of our great Redeemer: He was not only manifeſt in the fleſh, and *in all things made like to his brethren*, as a merciful and a faithful High-prieſt, but he is *ſeen of Angels*. Theirs was a nature that he ſlid over, both in his humiliation and his advance-

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ment. You will find that their ſtation was ſomething that lay between the one and the other: For in order to the ſuffering of death, he was made *lower than the Angels*, and when he is received up into glory, he is made *ſo much better than the Angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they*; and yet you ſee they are brought into the account that we have of him, as admirers, if not gainers, by the purchaſe of his mercy, *He was ſeen of Angels.*

As this belongs to the myſtery of godlineſs, ſo it contains in it ſomething wonderful, and therefore we muſt look farther than the ſound of the word. He was ſeen of men, and when *they ſaw him,* Iſa. iii. 2. *there was no form or comlineſs in him, that they ſhould deſire him.* He was ſeen of devils, one of 'em cried out, I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God; and therefore if that's all, that the Angels were among the ſpectators of his perſon and actions, it is not important enough to have a place in this text. There's no myſtery in it. But the word muſt be taken in a larger view, as it comprehends their diligent attention to him their admiration and delight in him, and the pleaſure with which they obſerv'd the glory of his merit, the ſucceſs of his death, and the triumph of his reſurrection. I ſhall proceed upon this head in the following method.

1. Enquire into the meaning of the phraſe, what it was for Chriſt to be *ſeen of Angels.*

2. Shew that this belongs to him as GOD, for under that title we are carried thro' the whole account that is given of him. And,

3. That this is a *myſtery*, one of the wonders of our Religion, and

4. That

4. That it is a myſtery of *godlineſs*. Believing it makes us better; we are *nouriſhed up in the words of good doctrine.* SERM. XXII.

I. What is it for that *God* who was manifeſt in the fleſh, and juſtified in the Spirit, to be *ſeen of Angels?* I anſwer, This word gives us the eſteem they had, firſt, for his Perſon, and, ſecondly, for the deſign that he came about.

1. We may hence collect the eſteem they had for the *Perſon* of our Lord. I don't here conſider his relation to 'em as a Creator, for he made 'em, and not they themſelves. *By him were all things created, whether in heaven, or in earth, whether they be thrones or dominions, principalities or powers, all things were created by him, and for him.* Col. i. 16. But I ſhall obſerve the regard they paid to him as the Mediator between God and man, as *the man Chriſt Jeſus*, as one made lower than themſelves; and this you will collect from the ſeveral parts of his ſtory.

You may ſee the concern that the Angels had at his birth, his baptiſm, his temptation in the wilderneſs, his agony, his reſurrection, his aſcenſion, and the conſequences of that in heaven. In all theſe times he was nearly attended by the Spirits about the throne. A detachment of the heavenly guards was ſent down; *Of the Angels he ſaith, he makes his Angels Spirits;* Heb. i. 7. this being connected to what the Spirit ſaith of Chriſt Jeſus, lets us ſee theſe two things. *Firſt*, The nature of the Angels, that they are *Spirits*, purely and ſimply ſo, not embodied, not incarnate; and, *Secondly*, That they are thus *made* for ſervice, to be capable of more expeditious duty than we can poſſibly come into. They were made Spirits with regard to the Son; their lively and active nature is imployed about him: But it's time that I enter upon the particulars under which I'm to range my thoughts.

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1. He was seen and lov'd and admir'd by the Angels at his *birth*. How ready were they to tell the news, and to serve the design? Observe with what a tenderness and caution they do their office: for they knew that the dazzle of *their* nature would be too much for a conversation with *ours*; therefore when one of 'em stands at the right hand of the altar of incense, as *Zacharias* was there attending in his place, his first work was to take off all fear and trembling; upon which he tells him, that

Luk. i. 13. *his prayer was heard, and his wife*, who was now stricken in years, as well as himself, *should have a son*. The very naming of that turns the dread into a dispute. *Zacharias* is more astonish'd at what he heard, than at what he saw, *Whereby shall I know this, seeing that I am an old man?* But the Angel describes the office of the child who should be born, and does it in such a way, that he might

ver. 14, 15, 16. well say, *Thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord.*

There had been many a prophet and eminent man among 'em, and yet no such preparations made for his coming into the world; but the reason of all this is, that *many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God, and he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias*. Before whom? Before *the Lord God*, to whom he should turn the children of *Israel:* And who is this *Lord their God*, before whom he was to go, but he that had *the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily? Zacharias* seems to make no difficulty of it, when

ver. 67. he came to circumcise the child. *The holy Ghost was then upon him*, and under that influence he de-

ver. 76. livers those words, *Thou child shall be called the prophet of the* HIGHEST: *for thou shalt go before the face of the* LORD *to prepare his ways.*

There

There must be a miserable tearing of all the connection that these passages have to one another, before we can suppose that our blessed Saviour himself is not here call'd the *Lord God of the children of Israel* by the Angel, and the *Most High* by *Zacharias*. And of this *John* bare witness, *I am not the Christ, but am sent before him*; as it was said he should *go before him*. So gentle and kind was this Angel, first to take off the fright, and then to give in his message. In the same manner he proceeded with the Virgin *Mary*. *She was troubled at the saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be:* And when he tells her of having a Son, tho' her objection was much greater than *Zacharias*'s, yet she rests upon that answer, *With God nothing is impossible.* SERM. XXII. ver. 29. ver. 37.

How careful, how condescending was it, for *Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God*, thus to talk with poor mortals! The like goodness do they shew at the actual birth of our Lord. *There were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night, and lo the Angel of the Lord came upon 'em, and the glory of the Lord shone round about 'em, and they were sore afraid.* You need not wonder much at that, for this apparition was of another kind from those in the Old Testament. Then Angels put on the form of men, so that oftentimes they were taken for no more, till after they had deliver'd their message: But to these shepherds the Angel look'd more like himself. However, he soon takes off the fright, or at least mingles something with it, *Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people: For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign to you, Ye shall find the babe wrapt in swadling-cloaths, lying in a manger.* ch. ii. 8, 9. ver. 10, 11, 12.

Observe,

SERM. XXII. Observe, tho' the manifestation was glorious and frightful, yet the thing told 'em was important, and what they had long expected; and the sign was as familiar and descriptive as they could desire it to be: so that you see what effect this had upon 'em: tho' we cannot suppose they had lost their terror, yet they resolve to make the experiment. There's no such crying out as there was between *Manoah* and his wife: *Alas, we shall die, for we have seen an Angel of the Lord!* No, no, but *they said one to another, let us go even now to Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us: and they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.* 'Twas a thing that only mere necessity could have occasion'd, that a new-born child should be thrown into such a place. They in the *inn* could easily tell how it came about, because there was no other room for 'em; but that shepherds in a distant field should know this strange accident, and enquire for a child by a token that never happen'd before, was remarkable. No wonder that *they return'd glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto 'em.* So well had the Angel made himself intelligible to poor unlearned men, who could have no interest by the contrivance of the plot, and no capacity to take a part in it.

Judg. xiii. 22.

How amazing is it, that a creature who *stands before God,* should deliver himself to a company of shepherds, so as to leave 'em in no confusion? It shews how hearty he was in the cause he came about. Nay, besides this one, there was *suddenly with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will towards men.* Observe, this multitude did not appear at first, for then the shepherds would have been sunk too low to have

receiv'd

receiv'd any meſſage; but after the Angel had gone diſtinctly thro' his errand, let 'em know what had happen'd, and given 'em an inconteſtible rule how they ſhould be aſſur'd of it; when he had poſſeſs'd 'em of the whole ſtory, *then* in a moment the reſt who long'd to begin, the whole multitude of the heavenly hoſt, praiſed God; when the ſhepherds could be pleas'd with it, and not frighted. SERM. XXII.

And they do it in ſuch a ſong as could never be conceiv'd to come from thoſe that kept flocks by night. For ſhepherds to talk of viſions and angelical conſorts, might be ſuſpected as vain and deluſive, but when they bring a ſong with 'em ſo full of the cauſe it refers to, none can think it was of their own compoſing, and therefore it is ſaid, *that all they that heard it, wonder'd at thoſe things which were told 'em by the ſhepherds.*

There are ſeveral paſſages that I might bring under this head, as the Angel of the Lord's *appearing to Joſeph in a dream*, and bidding him *not fear* Matt. i. 18. *to take to him Mary his wife*, and giving him that anſwer to his objection which none but an Angel could give him: *That which is conceiv'd in her is of the holy Ghoſt.* So again, the Angel of the Lord appears to him in another dream, and directs him to *ariſe, and take the young child and his mother, and* ch. ii. 13. *go into Egypt, and be there until he brought him word.* And when *Herod* was dead, this Angel appears to him in a dream *the third time*, with an order for him to *take the young child and his mother, and go* ver. 20. *into the land of Iſrael.* Nay, *Fourthly*, there is another inſtance, relating to this period, that he is *warn'd again* in a dream to *turn aſide into the parts* ver. 22. *of Galilee*, and come and live in a city call'd *Nazareth.* So diligent were thoſe Angels to convey the news, and to ſerve the deſign, either by voices or dreams, as the people concern'd were prepar'd to receive 'em.

2. He

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2. He was seen of Angels, *i. e.* admir'd and lov'd by 'em at his *baptism*, which was properly his institution or entrance upon the public ministry. He submitted to that ordinance, that he might *fulfil all righteousness*; and when it was over, *heaven open'd, the holy Ghost descended upon him*, and a testimony came from thence, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* If heaven open'd, you may be sure the Angels either came down or gaz'd thro'. They who had attended his birth, and sung him into the world, they who had watch'd him down to *Egypt* and up again, they who had receiv'd a charge concerning him in his youth, in their hands to bear him up, who had encamp'd round about him, more than they do about every one that fears the Lord; These, I say, would be looking on, when the Spirit came down: first, to give him his qualifications, and then to proclaim his credentials: For as he was *anointed with the holy Ghost and with power*, so *John* himself professes, *I knew him not, but he that sent me to baptize said, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, that same is he who baptizes with the holy Ghost. They go forth to behold King Solomon in his crown, on the day of his espousals, and the day of the gladness of his heart.*

Mat. iii. 15.

ver. 17.

Joh. i. 33.

Cant. iii. ult.

3. At his temptation in the wilderness, or rather after it, he was seen of Angels. He was there forty days and forty nights. He went thither *to be tempted of the Devil.* He submitted to the necessity and torment of nature, for after such long fasting, he hungred. And as Satan had put him upon working a miracle for bread, and casting himself down from the temple to try whether the Angels would observe their charge, and upon worshiping him for the kingdoms and glories of this world: So *when the Devils left him, the Angels came and ministred to him.*

Mat. iv. 11.

What

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What thoſe words comprehend, we are not told in particular; but we may without any danger ſuppoſe it from the nature of the temptation. *Firſt*, that they brought him food; for it was that he wanted, and he told the Devil, that *man liv'd not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God*, i. e. by any other proviſion that the creation affords; for the word proceeding out of the mouth of God, is there to be underſtood of the gifts of his hand, as you will find by comparing it with the original paſſage, *Deut.* viii. 3. *He humbled thee, and ſuffer'd thee to hunger, and fed thee with Manna, that he might make thee know that man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord does man live.* Here the *Manna* is call'd a word proceeding out of the mouth of the Lord; and this, you know, has that character given it, that *man did eat Angels food*, i. e. the food which they brought. So that it is not improbable, that when they miniſtred to him, it was to ſupply his neceſſity. And as they had receiv'd a charge concerning him in their hands to bear him up, ſo they carried him ſafely thro' the wilderneſs. They had no occaſion to aſſiſt him in the conflict, knowing that *his own power would bring ſalvation, and his fury uphold him*; but it was their duty and delight to attend him afterwards.

Iſa. lxiii. 5.

4. At his agony in the garden he was ſeen of Angels. He was to endure it, and to endure it in his own Perſon, without any aſſiſtance from thoſe glorious creatures that wiſh'd him well: *He trod the winepreſs alone, and of the people there was none with him*; and therefore he ſpeaks as one totally deſerted. He took no more than three diſciples with him, and he withdrew himſelf even from them about a ſtone's-caſt, but deſir'd them to watch. There he pleads with the Father, and

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Luke xxii. 42, 43.

at lasts submits to him. His disciples are asleep, their eyes are shut, when the pores of his body are open in a dreadful manner; for *his sweat was as it were great drops of blood:* and then it is observ'd, *there appear'd to him an Angel from heaven to strengthen him.*

This can be understood of no more than some few supports that were given to his human nature. 'Twas that which recoil'd, which fainted, swet, and bled; and this must have *a little strength* to go thro' the remaining sorrow. He had not strength enough to *bear* his cross, but he must have enough to *live* so long upon it as he did, to give several orders from it, to cry out, to say it is finish'd with a full voice, and immediately to die at once. How careful was this good Angel, that he might, in a station which made him lower than themselves, be able to go thro' his undertaking?

5. At his resurrection he was seen and attended of Angels. They were ready to serve him at all times; but for important reasons oblig'd to leave him at his death. He tells *Peter*, that he could pray to the Father, *who would presently send him more than twelve legions of Angels.* And if the Father had sent 'em, they would gladly have come; and what work must one of them make in a cabal of Sadducees who believ'd neither Angel nor Spirit? But then, saith he, *how should the Scriptures be fulfill'd that thus it must be?* So that it was necessary *for the suffering of death*, that he should be stript of his guards.

But when he came to rise again, all these restraints are over. The Angel of the Lord, as one no longer held in, goes early in the morning, and by an earthquake *rolls away the stone from the door of the sepulchre; his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow.*

Matth. xxviii. 2, 3.

And

And see what different distributions he made of his influences: *For fear of him did the keepers shake, and become as dead men*; and yet you may be sure these were pick'd out as the stoutest of the faction. But to a couple of poor disconsolate women he saith, *Fear not, for I know ye seek Jesus who was crucified: he is not here, he is risen as he said. Come see the place where the Lord lay; and go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead, and goes before you into Galilee: lo, I have told you.* "I "*your* friend, and *his* servant; he has left me be- "hind, that you might have no disappointment." "Tho' the keepers lay sprawling, *none of the men of might could find their hands,* yet these women *departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy.* There was an awe upon their spirits, but it gave 'em a delicious confusion, and *they ran to bring the disciples word.* Afterwards some of the disciples came, and see nothing of him, and therefore go their way. *Mary* who had brought them to the sepulchre continues weeping there, and will not leave it. Upon this, *she sees two Angels in white, sitting one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.* So ready were these happy creatures to shew him their regard, that they will go and *live* a while in the place where he had been *dead.* Angels in a grave! the sons of immortal life in the chambers of death! that they should sit where none in their nature shall ever lie, is very unaccountable. But you may say of their behaviour over our Lord's grave, as it is said of his over that of *Lazarus, Behold how they lov'd him!*

ver. 5, 6, 7.

ver. 8.

6. He was seen of Angels, *i. e.* admir'd and attended by 'em at his ascension. There were forty days, which, as they fell between his manifestation in the flesh, and his being receiv'd up into glory, so they partook of both, *i. e.* he was neither always with his disciples, nor had he totally left 'em.

SERM. XXII. There was in his converſation a mixture of the inhabitant and the ſtranger: ſuch an intermediate life was only to hold the length of forty days. And this being the laſt that his diſciples ſhould ſee of him here below, he was determin'd to conclude his work upon earth with a dignity ſuitable to the errand that brought him hither.

Luke xxiv. 50, 51. The ſtory is told by *Luke*, that he *led 'em out to Bethany, and lift up his hands and bleſs'd 'em; and as he bleſs'd 'em he was parted from them.* In ano-

Acts i. 9. ther book it is ſaid, *When he ſpake theſe things, whilſt they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud receiv'd him out of their ſight.* But tho' they might not ſee all the ſolemnity with which he went up, as not being able to bear it, yet it is deſcrib'd, *Pſal.* lxviii.

Pſ. lxviii. 17. that *the chariots of God are twenty thouſands, even thouſands of Angels; the Lord is among 'em.* Who is this Lord, but the great Mediator? *When* was he among 'em, but at the time that he *aſcended up on high, and led captivity captive?* This title, *the chariots of* GOD, intimates their office. He is ſaid in another place to *ride on the wings of the wind, and to make the clouds his chariot*, i. e. (to bring it as near to our own conceptions as can be) they attend him where he moves. They go up with him, ſhouting, ſinging, praiſing, filling the air in their paſſage with melody, and the heaven in their entry with triumph. And the whole of that pompous glory concluded in this ſervice of the Angels, that two of them ſtood by the Apo-

Acts i. 11. ſtles *in white apparel, which alſo ſaid, Ye men of Galilee, why ſtand ye gazing up into heaven? This ſame Jeſus which is taken up from you, ſhall ſo come in like manner as ye have ſeen him go into heaven.*

7. He is ſeen of the Angels in heaven. *John* ſaw in the midſt of the throne, and of the four

Rev. v. 7. creatures, and the four and twenty elders, *a Lamb as it had been ſlain.* It is obſerv'd, that *when he brings*

brings the first begotten into the world, he saith, Let all Heb. i. 6.
the Angels of God worship him. This bringing him into the world may be understood of his Incarnation; and if they were to worship him *then*, we may conclude what a profound regard they would give him when he was made *perfect from his sufferings.* But some are of opinion, that the word *again* should not be the tye between one verse and another, but connected to what is here said. That it ought not to be as we read it, *again, when he brings the first begotten*, but when he brings the first begotten again into the world, *i. e.* at his resurrection and ascension. When he returns to *the glory, that he had with the Father before the world was*, then are orders issu'd out to the Angels to *worship him.* But I promise my self more room to consider this passage when I come to argue from the behaviour of the Angels to our Redeemer, as an evidence of his Deity. That such a carriage as they are directed to can be given to no other than the supreme Being, one that is *over all, God blessed for ever.*

SERMON XXIII.

March 15. 1718-19.

2. THE esteem the Angels had for our blessed Lord, appears from their care to promote the *design* that he came about. Tho' he was not in their nature, nor had they any need of his purchase, yet his good will towards men is what they follow with their hearty wishes. We read of the care they have to spread the Gospel, their particu-

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lar tenderneſs for miniſters, their joy at the converſion of a ſinner, their diligence about the heirs of ſalvation, their readineſs to take the charge of a dying believer, and the welcome they give him into the place of their own habitation.

1. Chriſt is ſeen and admir'd of the Angels, in his *deſign* as well as his *Perſon*, becauſe it is their care to ſpread the Goſpel. Not to preach it, for that would rather confound ſinners than awaken 'em: 2 Cor. iv. 7. *We have this treaſure in earthen veſſels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us*; yet the Scripture has taken notice of their zeal about this great affair. Hence we read of *the* Rev. xiv. 6, 7. *angels flying thro' the midſt of heaven, having the everlaſting Goſpel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, ſaying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come; and worſhip him that made heaven and earth, and the ſea, and the fountains of water.* This viſion was of a thing that ſhall never be, *i. e.* we cannot think that God will lay aſide men of like paſſions with ourſelves, and make thoſe Spirits his miniſters who are all of 'em *flames of fire.* But thus much may be argu'd from it, that they do ſome way or other promote the knowledge of Chriſt among men, and ſo lead 'em into the methods of life eternal.

They were the firſt preachers that we read of in the new Teſtament, to *Zacharias*, the Virgin *Mary*, and the ſhepherds. In their diſcourſes to each of theſe, they lay out the nature, the office, and the deſign of our Redeemer. That he ſhould Luke i. 32, 33. be call'd *the Son of the higheſt, and the Lord his God ſhall give him the kingdom of his Father David; and he ſhall rule over the houſe of Jacob, and of that kingdom there ſhall be no end* To the ſhepherds they do not only proclaim his birth, and his title, *a Saviour who is Chriſt the Lord*, but the great reſult

sult of all this dispensation, that it would be *glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will towards men.* SERM. XXIII.

Nay, I may take their ministry from a more early date. *Daniel* wept in prayer for his people, his holy city, and the sanctuary of the Lord that was desolate. An Angel comes down, after he had *chasten'd himself with fasting and supplication*; and what was it to tell him? a great deal more than the news of political mercies, that the captivity of *Jerusalem* was accomplish'd. Besides that, he leads his thoughts into the main hope of *Israel*, that *Messiah the Prince was to come*; to come both as a Prince and a Sacrifice: that he would *be cut off, to finish transgression, to make an end of sin, to bring in an everlasting righteousness, to seal up the vision and prophesy, and to anoint the most holy.* These are the chief doctrines of our Gospel, and they are reveal'd to that holy prophet by the Angel. ch. ii. 13, 14. Dan. ix. 24.

Do but observe what a nobler employment these happy creatures had upon the return of the people from *Babylon*, than when they conducted the children of *Israel* out of *Egypt*. God sent his Angel before 'em to *drive out the Amorite*; but there's no comparison between their providing for the *Jews* a plentiful country, and their opening out in a better light what had been *the hope of their fathers.* They brought these glad tidings of great joy at several periods: We only *say* what they *sung:* They and we are in the same story; and what an aggravation will this be of our neglect, if we despise what they bring?

'Tis mention'd as a perpetual brand upon the children of *Israel*, that they loath'd the manna which was *Angels food*, i. e. the Angels convey'd it to 'em; and again, that tho' they *receiv'd the Law by the disposition of Angels*; *they did not keep it:* and that *the word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every transgression* Acts vii. 53. Heb. ii. 2.

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greſſion and diſobedience received a recompence of reward. But as their care about *us* is more engag'd, ſo our unbelief is more enhanc'd. When the Apoſtle had told us of the Angels *flying through the midſt of heaven, having the everlaſting Goſpel,* He goes on to ſhew us their zeal for the reformation of Chriſtianity from thoſe corruptions under which it has ſuffer'd; and his propheſy is to be underſtood of a particular period that we are waiting for.

Rev. xiv. 8. *Then followed another Angel, ſaying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, becauſe ſhe made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*

How comes this to be the concern of Angels? why are they in heaven ſo much affected with our ſufferings upon earth? 'Tis certain, their religion is always clean and always eaſy: *Babylon* ſhall never hurt *them*; but it is a Redeemer's cauſe; and that warms 'em into a zeal for thoſe happy days when the mother of abominations is to periſh with all her arts. This they proclaim, not only as a

ver. 9, 10. thing that will be, but they give fair warning, *If any man worſhip the beaſt and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the ſame ſhall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he ſhall be tormented with fire and brimſtone, in the preſence of the holy Angels, and in the preſence of the Lamb.*

What a teſtimony is here given to our ſeparation from thoſe corruptions that have ſtole into the worſhip of God? 'Tis no matter to me by what convocations or councils it is cenſur'd, if we have the opinion of the Angels, *the general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born, whoſe names are written in heaven.* Value the Goſpel as it is chriſtian, and admire your religion as it is reform'd. An Angel preaches the one and encourages the other; and then comes in this remark upon the whole,

Here

Here is the patience of the Saints, here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. Our duty is an act of patience: A man that will be faithful will be oppos'd; and the thing we are oblig'd to keep, is, not only the commandments of God, what's contain'd in natural religion, but *that faith of Jesus,* which we can only have by revelation. SERM. XXIII. ver. 12.

2. We may farther see the care of the holy Angels about the work of a Redeemer, from their tenderness for the ministers of the Gospel. I am not now making way for any of these whimsical stories with which the Papists have bubbled their readers. I know no more of Angels than the Scripture has told me; their ministry is a part of the revelation I meet with there. 'Tis plain, tho' they do not preach the Gospel, they have a special charge about those that do. We have examples of this, both in the old and new Testament, which shews the wisdom of our Redeemer, that the persons who are like to meet with hardships from the inhabitants of this world, shall have better usage from those that belong to another.

I'll go over a few passages that we find in the Acts of the Apostles. In the xii^th Chapter you read that *Peter* was design'd for the same violent death that *James* the brother of *John* had already suffer'd; and the utmost care is taken that he shall not escape. He is fast asleep between two soldiers, bound with two heavy chains. The Church can do no more than *pray for him*; and that's doing enough, for the work fell into able hands: *The Angel of the Lord* comes into the prison, raises him up, calls him out, the chains fell from his hands, and this in so still a manner, that *Peter thought he saw a vision; the iron gate that led to the city open'd of its own accord,* and he is left at liberty to visit a company of good people who were then at prayer Acts xii. 3.

SERM. XXIII. for him. When he was come to himself he said, *Now know I of a surety, that the Lord has sent his Angel, and has delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.* And, as if the Angel thought his work but half done in delivering an Apostle, unless he had also kill'd a tyrant, we are told at the end of that Chapter, that when *Herod* sat basking himself in the flatteries of a shouting croud, *the Angel of the Lord smote him, and he was eaten up of worms, and gave up the Ghost.* By this means *the word of God grew and multiplied.*

ver. 11.

ver. 23, 24.

Such another instance we have of their care about the Apostle *Paul.* He and his company were in a storm *fourteen days and nights*; they saw neither sun, moon, nor stars, and perhaps no brethren ashore were sensible of their danger, and therefore 'tis likely there was no extraordinary prayer for them, as there had been in the case of *Peter.* But if *Christians* knew not their danger, Angels did; for, saith *Paul, There stood by me this night the Angel of the Lord, whose I am, and whom I serve, and said, fear not, for thou must be brought before Cæsar, and lo, God has given thee all them that sail with thee.* Tho' our experience does not run upon these stories, yet we have ground to imagine, that the heavenly guards do us many an invisible kindness, without making any noise about it. The escapes that faithful ministers have had in times of persecution are so remarkable, that it is no straining upon the case, to suppose those favours convey'd by the standing officers of a Redeemer's Providence.

Acts xxvii. 20, 21.

3. Their love to the great work that our Lord came about, appears in the *joy there's among 'em at the conversion of a sinner.* Our Saviour gives us this under the similitude of two parables: The man that found his lost sheep, and the woman her piece

piece of money; they are each of 'em represented as *calling their friends and neighbours together to come and rejoice with 'em.* These friends and neighbours neither suffer'd by the affliction, nor gain'd by the mercy. They were unconcern'd, any farther than sympathy and good nature made 'em look upon it as their own case at second-hand. The Angels are very properly signified by those names; they neither lose nor get by the ruin or salvation of men. If there was no such thing as a redemption for our nature, there would still be the same happiness for theirs; but they are call'd in to rejoice with a Redeemer. He who has *sought and sav'd that which was lost* is the person whom they love, and therefore they are glad with him. This is the very application that our Lord himself makes of the parable. *I say unto you, there is joy among the Angels of heaven over one sinner that repenteth.* Luk. xv. 7.

From hence you may conclude, either their presence in our assemblies, or the correspondence that is kept open between our world and theirs. There's no such thing as an awaken'd soul, a sinner turn'd from the error of his way, but they know it, either by observation, or by tidings; and this sets 'em a rejoicing. Why? From the good will they have to a Redeemer. They saw him in *the travail of his soul*; they observ'd him in the garden, the weight and torture of that *agony*; they beheld him bleeding, groaning, and dying upon the cross; and it must needs be their pleasure to find that all this was not in vain; that as he gave himself for sinners, so by his grace sinners give themselves to him. They rejoice in this as the effect of a dear bargain, as a mighty purchase, and a glorious victory. There's more than love to a soul, that fills the joy; 'tis part of their praises to him who *came to save us in the name of the Lord,* and therefore they sing *Hosanna in the highest.*

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And if they are so delighted in the repentance of one sinner, what will they be when the word of the Lord has a free course, and is glorify'd? With what pleasure do they look on, when peo-
Acts ii. 41. ple flock to the Lord, *as doves to their windows*, every one fluttering and pressing for light? What a good day was that to the Angels in heaven, when one sermon fetch'd in three thousand souls! when the people were *prick'd at their hearts*, the Angels felt the conviction; not in pain and affrightment as they did, but they saw what it would end in; and we may suppose from the pleasure that diffused among them then, what a share they will have in *joying and beholding our order and the stedfastness of our faith in Christ:* When the days come that *the knowledge of the Lord shall* not *drop as*
Isa. xi. 9. *the rain, and distil as the dew*, but *cover the earth as the waters do the sea.* It will make our earth look like their heaven, and their heaven still bright-
ch. xxx. 26. er and sweeter; *As the light of the moon shall be like the light of the sun, so the light of the sun shall be seven-fold, as the light of seven days.* What an encouragement should this be to ministers, and indeed to all of you, whom the Angels have so much obliged? Fulfil ye their joy, promote their happiness, give 'em occasion to bring more praises into heaven.

4. You see the concern they have for the work of Christ, by their care about the heirs of salvation. Our Lord has told us, that they are *all ministring Spirits*; *first*, to him; to wait upon his person, to admire and contemplate his glory: But
Heb. i. 14. that's not all; for, *secondly*, they are *sent forth to minister to them who shall be the heirs of salvation.* Where you observe,

First, That their whole number is included in this order, they are *all* ministring Spirits. *Gabriel* himself, who *stands in the presence of God*, goes down

to

to *Daniel* in a dungeon, to *Zacharias* in the temple, to the Virgin *Mary* in her solitude.

Secondly, Tho' they keep their own nature, yet that's employ'd for our good. When our Saviour came down, he took upon him a new nature: The Word was made flesh, that he might dwell among us; but these still continue pure *spirits*, and do their service without any change of constitution.

Thirdly, For this they are oblig'd to leave the realms of happiness and light. They are *sent forth*; not but that it's heaven wherever they go. They don't depart from the joy and glory that are bestow'd upon their nature. However, the commission reaches to our world; there they must come, and there do their service.

Fourthly, 'Tis to the whole body of the faithful; not ministers only, or Christians of a higher standing, but every one that has obtain'd mercy of the Lord is their charge. They had as much concern for *Lazarus* who died at a gate, as for *David* who breath'd his last in a palace.

Fifthly, This is with regard to the purchase that Christ has made. For the people to whom they do these offices, are consider'd as *heirs of salvation*, the children of a King, the pensioners of a Conqueror.

Sixthly, Tho' believers are not actually in heaven, yet the thoughts of what they shall be have an influence upon the Angels; they minister to those who *shall be* the heirs of salvation, *i. e.* shall be possest of it, and come to it as their great and last inheritance. What an esteem do they shew for Christ, when they are not asham'd of any whom he owns? Every drop of his blood is precious, every purchase of his grace is dear. Christians are beneath 'em in nature, but that's no matter, since they are united in the head. In pursuance of these

SERM. XXIII. orders, *the Angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear him, and delivers 'em.* Having received a charge concerning us, in their hands they will bear us up, *lest at any time we dash our feet against a stone.*

Pſ. xxxiv. 7.

5. Their attendance in our assemblies to see what is done there, is another argument of their concern in the design that our Redeemer came about. 'Tis no force upon the imagination to suppose that they are looking on; we are charg'd to keep up an external decency *because of the Angels.* Now why should they who are bless'd with a dwelling in God's house, and praise him there, come down to services so much beneath their own? What is there in our duties worth their beholding? Is it not an abusing of themselves to be among those who dwell in houses of clay, and whose devotions are as earthy and mouldring as their persons? and yet hither they come.

1 Cor. xi. 20.

They hear the doctrines of the pulpit, and see the behaviour of a congregation. Tho' they cannot look into your hearts, yet there's enough in your carriage that betrays what sort of principles are at work within. Your outward reverence to that name which is above every name, your delight in the law of the Lord, your *receiving the love of the truth are things* within their observation. When *Jacob* went on his way, *the Angels of God met him*; for which reason he call'd the name of the place *Mahanaim*, because that was *God's host.* And before that, when he dream'd, he saw *a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, and the Angels of God ascending and descending upon it*; which makes him cry out, *How fearful is this place! this is the house of God, this is the gate of heaven!*

Gen. xxxii. 2.

xxviii. 12.

We can make no such conclusions as these about any places, but we come to promote the work which Angels love. From our Gospel they learn the

myſteries of the kingdom. *Unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places is made known by the church the manifold wiſdom of God.* Not that we can tell 'em theſe things better than they know 'em; but nevertheleſs they are here as learners. They admire every place and company where the doctrines of the Goſpel are open'd. The hiſtory of our religion comprehends *the ſufferings of Chriſt and the glory that ſhould follow, and theſe the Angels deſire to look into.* They are in a bending, ſearching, prying poſture.

Eph. iii. 10.

1 Pet. i. 11, 12.

Tho' they ſung at the making of the earth, and its ſeparation from the infolding waters, yet here is *a new ſong put into their mouths.* What is more entertaining, as it ſhews a greater act of wiſdom, and brings in a larger return of glory? And is it not good to inſiſt upon what they admire? Suppoſe they were to chooſe our ſubjects, what would they have us preach upon? Are they againſt *myſteries*, and things that belong to reveal'd religion? No, what they deſire to know, is *the manifold wiſdom of God; the wiſdom of God in a myſtery, even the hidden wiſdom that God ordain'd before the world to our glory.* There's nothing more pleaſing to 'em than when miniſters *make all men ſee, what is the fellowſhip of the myſtery, that from the beginning of the world has been hid in God.*

1 Cor. ii. 7.

Eph. iii. 10.

6. Their eſteem of Chriſt and the work he came about, is ſeen by their readineſs to take care of departing ſouls. There is ſomething of this which a Redeemer does in his own perſon; *I will come again and receive you to my ſelf, that where I am ye may be alſo.* The martyr *Stephen* was conſcious to this, when he cried out, *Lord Jeſus receive my ſpirit.* But yet the Scripture has alſo told us, that the Angels do a kind and friendly part upon theſe occaſions. *They carried Lazarus's ſoul into Abraham's boſom.* It is happy indeed, when the

Joh. xiv. 3.

Acts vii. 59.

Luke xvi. 22.

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the world below are shifting from us, they either can or will do us no more service, *then* do these new acquaintance step in. They will at last have the charge of collecting our dust, and building up those bodies that have been so long pull'd in pieces. Nay, they are to sort the dead, and take away the wicked from among the just. Tho' this will be the effect of the voice of the Son of man, he is to call over the graves that the slain may live; yet when he comes about this, it is *with his mighty Angels. Michael the Archangel disputed with the devil about the body of Moses.* And as they take care that one part of a believer shall *rest in hope*, so they go with a readiness to shew the other *the path of life.*

Jude 9.

7. We see their esteem of Christ and the work that he came about, by the welcome they give his people into the place of their own habitation. If they minister to those who *shall be* the heirs of salvation, before they take possession of their inheritance, what will they do when these happy persons have thrown off imperfection and mortality! It is said at the resurrection, we shall be *like the Angels*, or ἰσάγγελοι, equal to 'em. That is, we shall *die no more*, or live in that gross and carnal way that we do at present; we must be then as they have been always. Thus you see how he who was manifest in the flesh, and justified in the Spirit, is seen of Angels; what a regard they have for his *person*, and with what a zeal they promote his *design:* And in these two particulars I have consider'd the first head, which was to *open* the expression, and shew you what is contain'd in it.

II. The next general head is this, that he who was thus seen of Angels is no other than *the most high God;* and that we cannot have lower notions of *Him* without charging the guilt of idolatry upon

upon *them.* 'Tis pity that any who profeſs Chriſtianity are uneaſy to be told ſo, or that thoſe opinions ſhould grow into faſhion, that make the *leaſt* of a Saviour; that *for this name* of Chriſt miniſters are to bear reproach, and to *ſuffer ſhame.* But whatever ſatisfaction ſome can give themſelves in a faith that reſts upon a creature, I hope there are many among you who will receive it as the glad tidings of ſalvation, when we ſay unto *Zion, Thy* GOD *reigneth.* This is, and I truſt ever ſhall be, the language of our Goſpel, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear. *O Zion, that bringeſt good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain: O Jeruſalem, that bringeſt good tidings, lift up thy voice with ſtrength: lift it up, be not afraid: ſay to the cities of Judah, behold your* GOD. SERM. XXIII. Iſa. xl. 9.

I have already argu'd it at large from the two former branches of the myſtery of godlineſs; and tho' it is a *wonder,* it is nevertheleſs to me a *truth,* that is dearer than all others; that he who was manifeſt in the fleſh, he who is juſtified in the Spirit is a GOD; not meerly by virtue of the office that he ſuſtain'd, but in the higheſt and moſt proper ſenſe of the word; and as *we rejoice in his ſalvation, ſo in the name of* OUR GOD *we will ſet up our banners.* Pſal. xx. 5.

I ſhall now purſue the argument from what is further ſaid of him, that he was *ſeen of Angels.* Their homage is a great deal too much for any one but him that made 'em; as you will find from the worſhip they pay him, the meditation they devote to him, their obedience to his commands, their attendance upon his perſon and his people. What they do each of theſe ways would be no better than idolatry, if it was given to a created nature.

1. The

SERM. XXIII. Heb. i. 6.

1. The Scripture has expreſly told us, that they worſhip him. The place I refer to is *Heb.* i. 6. *When he brings again the firſt begotten into the world, he ſaith, And let all the Angels of God worſhip him.* That the Perſon here ſpoke of as deſign'd for this honour was our bleſſed Lord is above all diſpute, both from his being call'd the *firſt begotten*, and the reference there is to ſome particular period, in which he is ſaid to be *brought into the world.* Whether that is his incarnation or his aſcenſion, I ſhall not now enquire. 'Tis plain enough that this comes in among his glories, that *all the Angels of God ſhall worſhip him.*

I know that the opinion which ſets bounds to the perfection of Chriſt, will do the ſame to the worſhip of Angels, and tell us this is not adoration. But how to talk of what Angels do in any other than the words of Scripture I know not. And ſurely thoſe people are not only ludicrous to men, but inſolent to the Angels, who will dare to interpret this action of theirs by another text, give fear to whom fear, and *worſhip to whom worſhip is due.*

The Apoſtle gives us theſe words as a quotation out of the old Teſtament, and they can ſignifie no leſs in one place than they do in another. The paſſage you have *Pſal.* xcvii. 7. *Worſhip him, all ye Gods.* What the Pſalmiſt calls *Gods*, the Apoſtle calls the *Angels of God;* but as the phraſe of *worſhip* is what they both uſe, we muſt by no means make the ſenſe of it ſo different, that in the one it is *devotion*, in the other *civility.* For the Apoſtle to ſpeak of one perſon, and the Pſalmiſt of another, would make the quotation impertinent. How can he prove that Chriſt is better than the Angels, by a ſentence out of the old Teſtament, when it is not to be underſtood of *Him?* How wide had this been from all the rules of argument, and how uncapable

capable of giving any conviction? If the Pſalmiſt does not ſpeak of a Redeemer, it could not be true that ſuch a thing *is ſaid* of him, worſhip him all ye Gods: and therefore we both may and muſt fetch the *ſenſe* from that Pſalm, out of which the Apoſtle fetches the *words*. SERM. XXIII.

And who is it, whom thoſe Gods, or thoſe Angels are to worſhip? See of whom he ſpeaks, try whether you can conceive of his Deity with any of thoſe diminutions that are ſo much applauded. It is he who reigns for which *the earth muſt be glad, and the multitude of iſles rejoyce: clouds are about him, righteouſneſs and judgment are the habitation of his throne; a fire goes before his face, and burns up his enemies round about: his lightnings enlighten'd the world, the earth ſaw and trembled; the hills melted like wax at the preſence of the Lord, at the preſence of the Lord of the whole earth; the heavens declare his righteouſneſs, and all the people ſee his glory. Confounded be all thoſe that ſerve graven images, that boaſt themſelves of idols: worſhip him all ye Gods.* HIM whoſe glory he had thus deſcrib'd.

This Pſalm muſt have a great deal of garbling, before the expreſſions can be made low enough for a creature. If *David* does not ſpeak of the Moſt High in this place, he does it no where. To ſay, that all theſe characters may be given to one who has not the Supreme Nature, is to ſay that God has *given his glory to another*; for no words can be more deſcriptive of his Majeſty, than what are us'd on this occaſion. And to ſay, that tho' *David* ſpeaks of the moſt high God, yet the Apoſtle transfers the characters to one who is no more than the firſt of creatures, is drawing him under a two-fold guilt. *Firſt*, that he brings that into his argument which has no place there: he reaſons upon a falſhood; he affirms, that God has ſaid *That* of Chriſt which he never ſaid; and this in an Epiſtle

piſtle to the *Hebrews,* who of all people were the moſt afraid of running into idolatry. Nay, *Secondly,* there's ſomewhat worſe than this, that he is actually guilty of a robbery, and affirming that of a creature, which is peculiar to the moſt high God. This is what the Supreme Nature never did alienate from itſelf; and therefore He, whom the Angels are appointed to worſhip, as the Pſalmiſt tells us, is *high above all the earth, and exalted far above all Gods.*

March 29. 1719.

SERMON XXIV.

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THERE's another thing in our Saviour's being *ſeen of Angels,* that's an argument of his Divinity; and this may be deduc'd from their meditations of him. They throw in their beſt thoughts upon the ſubject of our redemption: *Theſe things the Angels deſire to look into.* They deſire it with the greateſt application and fervour; looking into 'em ſignifies their attention and perſeverance in the ſtudy; and what are *theſe things?* The Apoſtle tells us, they are ſuch as the Prophets in former ages did miniſter to us, and ſuch as are now *reported by them that have preach'd the Goſpel*; and in the confirmation of which the *holy Ghoſt is ſent down from heaven.* He had before given us the particulars under thoſe two heads, that comprehend all the articles of our religion, the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the glory that ſhall follow. This is what *the Spirit of Chriſt in the Prophets did teſtify before-hand:* This is the *ſalvation of which they*

1 Pet. i. 22.

they enquir'd earneſtly; and this is the *grace that is come unto us.* SERM. XXIV.

Now, merely to behold theſe ſufferings, and to gaze at the glory that came after 'em, cannot be all that the Angels do. Our Lord's enemies had a conviction of both theſe: they ſaw him die, and were aſtoniſh'd at the evidence that was given of his reſurrection: *None of thoſe things were done in a corner.* But the *bending down* of the Angels to this ſubject, as the *Greek* word ſignifies, παρακύπτω muſt be to a great deal more than matters of fact. They look'd at his ſufferings and the following glory, as caſting an influence upon one another. That he ſuffer'd in ſuch a way, as to procure, to deſerve, and demand all the happineſs for himſelf and his people, that's comprehended in the great name of *glory*. They ſaw that the conſequence of his death was no leſs than the higheſt honour for himſelf, and a full portion for all believers, in every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. *John beheld, and heard the voice of many Angels round about the throne, and the number of 'em was ten thouſand times ten thouſand, and thouſands of thouſands, ſaying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing.* Acts xxvi. 26. Rev. v. 11, 12.

Now, is it poſſible that a creature ſhould be equal to ſuch a claim? How could the puniſhing of one that is innocent bring a pardon to them that are guilty? Why muſt his *taſting death* be *for every man?* How can we reconcile it to our notions of God's juſtice, which demands ſatisfaction for ſin? *Firſt*, that this ſhould be exacted on one that *did not ſin*, and *Secondly*, that it ſhould be diſcharg'd from thoſe that did nothing but ſin? If an innocent perſon ſhould *chooſe* to die, yet what has this to dō with thoſe who *deſerve* to die?

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Their debt is never the leſs, except he that *makes* the ſatisfaction does alſo *receive* it.

And therefore, I don't at all wonder, that when people go off from the Deity of Chriſt, they make wretched work in explaining the ſtory of his death, and do what they can to ſink the imputation of his righteouſneſs. They will not allow that he died for his people as their ranſom and ſacrifice; and indeed I don't ſee how they can: for if he's a creature, let him be never ſo glorious, it would be an injury to *lay on him the iniquity of us all.* If it was no more than the caſe of an Angel, how great muſt the hardſhip be for one of them to come down into our nature, to live ſo poor and low as Chriſt did, and at laſt to die under a curſe? Might not ſuch a one plead, "Lord, why am I "ſent upon this errand? if thou wilt ſave any of "that wicked race, let it not be at my expence. "It was not *my law* that they broke; and there-"fore, if they muſt be the objects of thy love, "don't bring it about by making me the mark "of thine anger.

The higher any creature is above the Angels, the better would his argument have been againſt the fatigue and charges of this deſign. But it was *the Lawgiver* himſelf who made all the creation, and has a revenue of glory from it; it was He who

Gal. iv. 4. came *under the law*, that we might receive the adoption of ſons. He had no neceſſity upon him from the command of a ſuperior, but ſpeaks like one at liberty, *Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.* He then ſubmitted to take upon him a nature, that was to be ſupported, to be directed and controll'd.

Heb. x. 5. When he came into the world he ſaid, *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldſt not, but a body haſt thou pre-*

Phil. ii. 8. *pared me.* He made himſelf *of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a ſervant, and being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf.* But,

Antecedent

Antecedent to his own resolution, there was no government over him; and therefore the Apostle joins these two together, which cannot be understood of the same nature, but shews that the Person of whom he speaks is to be consider'd with this variety, that he came of the *Jews, as concerning the flesh*, but he is *over all, God blessed for evermore*. This is what the Angels desire to look into, as the good people of old were taught to believe by a figure; when the *Cherubims* were drawn with their eyes towards one another, and towards the mercy-seat. This was to denote the wonder they felt at the mystery of our redemption, and that what they look'd at was the work of a God. SERM. XXIV. Rom. ix. 5.

The mercy-seat was the throne of the Most High. We often read, that he *dwells between the Cherubims*. Their eyes were fix'd on *him*, as carrying on a design of love, *the pleasure of the Lord* that should prosper in his hand. And if that figure, either in colours or gravings, was an emblem of their desires to look into the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, you see *with whom* their conversation was, that their eyes were represented as turn'd upon a *God*. We can hardly conceive, that they should be so taken up in their eternity with the actions of a creature, or that they would think the humbling of one above 'em, so as to bring him a little below 'em, was a full amends to the justice of God, the avowance of his holiness, or the magnifying of his law.

There's more dishonour done to God by the sin of man, than the death of all the Angels in heaven could be able to repair; and the reason is, because the offence is offer'd to an Infinite Nature, and the recompence cannot be made by a finite one. Now, tho' Christ Jesus is above 'em, yet if he is a creature, he is still as far from infinite as they are. And therefore, when God speaks of putting him to death,

SERM. XXIV. Zech. xiii. 7. he calls it the awaking of his ſword *againſt the man that was his fellow.* 'Twas not enough that this Perſon ſhould be innocent, an Angel had *that character* in him, and could have died the juſt for the unjuſt; but he muſt be *equal* to the Party whom he came to ſatisfie, and then thoſe ſufferings had in 'em merit enough to claim all the glory that follow'd.

3. Their obedience to his commands is another argument of their regard to his Divinity; that as a GOD he is ſeen of Angels. Thus does the Apoſtle ſpeak of Him and of them. *Of the Angels he ſaith, Who makes his Angels Spirits, and his Miniſters a flame of fire.* To whom are they miniſters, but to Him that made 'em? He that gave 'em their ſpirituality, as ſo many flames of fire, is the only object of their veneration and duty. Well, the next words let us ſee which way their obedience is paid: *To the Son he ſaith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a ſceptre of righteouſneſs is the ſceptre of thy kingdom.* Can any thing greater than this be ſaid of the Divine Majeſty?

Heb. i. 7.

Both theſe paſſages are taken out of the book of Pſalms: that concerning the Angels is in the civth, where we read of God's eternal greatneſs; and it's mention'd as his nobleſt production of life, that he makes his Angels Spirits, and his Miniſters a flaming fire. Had there been, as we are lately told, two creatures above 'em, the Son and the holy Ghoſt, why did not the Pſalmiſt begin with theſe, as a more exalted inſtance of what was done in the creation? 'Tis apparent the ſcheme was not thought of in his day, but is reſerv'd for our later times.

The other paſſage is taken out of the xlvth Pſalm, and the words muſt mean the ſame in one place, that they do in the other: *To the Son he ſaith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* The tranſlation

on that ſome have inſinuated, *God is thy throne for ever*, carries in it ſuch an uncertain ſound, that I cannot determine theſe words are the right ſenſe, till I find they bear any ſenſe at all. Angels have *thrones*, and they are call'd *Gods*; and as their thrones are never to be deſtroy'd, in that ſenſe they are *for ever and ever*. But is there not ſomething in the ſentence too great for them? We muſt take care that in bringing down the words by ſuch an interpretation, we do not rob the Apoſtle of his deſign: for he is ſhewing us, that ſomething is ſaid to the Son, which never was ſaid of the Angels. Nay, he goes on, *The ſceptre of righteouſneſs is the ſceptre of thy kingdom*. You may bring theſe words low enough to underſtand 'em of *David* or *Solomon*; but can we imagine that the holy Spirit means no more? SERM. XXIV.

The addition, *God, even thy God has anointed Thee with the oyl of gladneſs above thy fellows*, does only prove that our Saviour is to be conſider'd in a lower created nature, which is what none denies: In that ſenſe, he ſaith, *I go to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God:* Where he puts his relation to the Moſt High as his God and Father, upon the ſame grounds with that which his people have. But the Apoſtle here tells us, that he is God in that ſenſe as to anſwer our higheſt notions of a Deity. THOU, LORD, *haſt in the beginning laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thine hands. They ſhall periſh, but thou remaineſt, and they ſhall all wax old, as does a garment, and as a veſture ſhalt thou fold them up, and they ſhall be chang'd; but thou art the ſame, and thy years ſhall not fail.* Theſe are things that were never mention'd of any but the moſt High God. That He is *the Creator of the ends of the earth, the high and lofty one that inhabits eternity*; that *the heavens are the Lord's*, and he is *without any va-* ver. 10, 11.

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riableneſs or ſhadow of turning. And yet here they are plainly affirm'd of Chriſt, and brought in as the reaſon, why the Angels ſhould *worſhip* him, and be *miniſtring Spirits* to him. They can argue as much for their duty to the Son, as we can for ours to the Father: *He has made us, and not we ourſelves; we are the work of his hands.*

To this the Scripture has given a happy teſtimony from a text that was never pretended to be dropt in copies, and cannot eaſily be mangled with criticiſm, *Col.* i. 14—18. he ſpeaks of the kingdom of *God's dear Son, in whom we have redemption thro' his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins.* When we talk of *his blood,* we muſt conſider him as a man like ourſelves, capable of dying as we are. But from this he riſes into other characters, that ſhew we are to regard him as an omnipotent Being: *By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, viſible and inviſible; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things conſiſt; and he is the head of the body the church, who is the beginning, the firſt-born from the dead.*

I don't remember a text in all the Bible where the work of creation is laid down in more lofty particulars. Here you ſee the foundation of that duty which the Angels ever pay him. The things ſaid to be done *by him* are never mention'd as the work of a creature. When the Lord anſwer'd *Job* out of the whirlwind, it was with this queſtion: *Where waſt thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?* and the reverence it produc'd from that good man was, *I know that* THOU *canſt do every thing.* But the particulars mention'd by the Apoſtle are greater than thoſe with which God fills his argument to *Job.* We read of things in heaven and earth, viſible and inviſible; thrones, dominions,

Job xxxviii. 4. xlii. 2.

dominions, principalities, and powers. These, I suppose, must be understood of those exalted Beings that are plac'd in such dignities. By thrones, we may conceive of the Angels that sit upon 'em; by dominions and principalities, the inhabitants above who have these honours belonging to 'em. Well, all things both above and below were created *by him, and for him.*

There is an answer to this argument, that things were created by Jesus Christ as an *instrument*; that's a wooden word indeed, and people must be very ready to part with the text and their senses too, before they can let the evidence of so plain a Scripture be turn'd off in that manner: 'tis talking by no rules of language. Will any one call the Lord Mayor of *London* the King's instrument, because by him he governs the city? Is not this *darkening counsel by words without knowledge?* But the weight of the argument is still heavier upon 'em, when it is said, that all things were not only created by him, but *for him.* Now, we know that the Lord has made all things *for himself.* We are not able to conceive of the Most High in greater apprehensions than those, that He is *the God for whom are all things, and by whom are all things:* that *of him, and thro' him, and to him, are all things.* Heb. ii. 10. Rom. xi. 36.

It would be blasphemy to say this of any other besides himself. 'Tis the language of their praises in heaven. The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sits upon the throne, and *worship him that lives for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne.* These are descriptions of the utmost reverence they can pay; and what they say with all this solemnity is, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.* Where's the difference between those professions and adorations, and what is here Rev. iv. 10, 11.

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expresly said of Christ Jesus, that all things were created *by him* and *for him?* How come the words on earth to be understood of a creature, when they in heaven give 'em to none but the Creator? How comes one text to signifie a supreme Agent, and another, without any diminution of language, to be no more than a lofty account of an instrument? Such blundering work will people make of it, when their reasons are too *great* to receive a mystery, and too *little* to explain it. No wonder that such an usage of revelation prepares the world to despise it all. For when many *follow these pernicious ways the way of truth is evil spoke of.*

2 Pet. ii. 3.

4. The attendance the Angels give to the person and people of a Redeemer, furnishes out another argument for his Divinity: *They are all ministring Spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be the heirs of salvation.* This is for his sake. Tho' in the same chapter they are call'd ministring spirits both to Him and to us, we cannot possibly give the words the same interpretation. All their offices of care and goodness are not only an act of friendship to believers, but of obedience to our Lord. Thus *Daniel* tells the King: *My God has sent his Angel to shut the lions mouths:* and *Gabriel* himself owns, *The commandment came forth, and I was caus'd to flee swiftly.* We read of his *giving the Angels a charge over us.* Our Saviour in his humiliation saith, he could *pray the Father, who would presently send him more than twelve legions of Angels.* And when they minister to the heirs of salvation, they are *sent* to do *it*; which supposes that their tenderness about us is all along carried on with a regard to him that is over 'em.

Heb. i. 14

Dan. vii. 22.

ix. 23.

Psal. xci. 11.

Now, who is this Person, and how do they behave towards him? We find, *Isa.* vi. 1. that the prophet *saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train fill'd the temple.* His train's

filling

filling the temple must refer to the work of salvation that he came about. Whether it is to be understood of his human nature, which is call'd *the temple of his body*, or the house of God at *Jerusalem, the city of the great King*, I shall not now enquire. The words are true in both senses; for when *the desire of all nations came, he fill'd the house with glory.* Hag. ii. 7. His throne that was high and lifted up, is to be understood of something greater than what he did upon earth: *Above this throne stood the Seraphims; each one had six wings; with twain he cover'd his face, with twain he cover'd his feet, and with twain he did flie.* SERM. XXIV.

Was not the solemnity of this attendance, hiding their faces as unable to look, their feet as unworthy to stand, and stretching their wings as ready to go, too much for a creature? Could they have done any more to him that made 'em? It is evident, they do not talk of him as one between themselves and the throne of God, as the Father's Deputy and Vicegerent, but cry *of* him in a way that some people would not have us cry *to* him: *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of thy glory.* Rev. iv. 8. This is the repeated attribute in heaven, *Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.* And tho' there is a great deal of pains taken to shew us, that the government over the earth may be committed to one that is not God by nature, yet this expression, *The whole earth is full of thy glory*, carries in it those praises that are ascrib'd to the Most High: *O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name above all the earth!* Ps. viii. 1. and again, *The earth is full of thy riches.* civ. 24.

The posts of the door mov'd at the voice of him that cried, and the house was fill'd with smoke. This, you'll say, might be the work of a creature: an Angel was able to do so much; but however, it is elsewhere mention'd as an instance of Omnipotence:

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Acts iv. 24.

tence: *They said, Lord, thou art God, who hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in 'em is, grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching out thy hands to heal, that signs and wonders may be done in the name of thy holy child Jesus.* No doubt of it, they here apply to the Father, and it is observ'd as a thing not unworthy of HIM, that *when they had pray'd, the place was shaken, where they were assembled together.* That smoke, which came into *Solomon*'s temple, is call'd *the glory of the Lord.* With regard to which it is said, that he would *dwell in the thick darkness;* so that such expressions as these, *The posts of the door mov'd at the voice of him that spake, and the house was fill'd with smoke,* are brought in as the work of Omnipotence in other places of Scripture, whatever they may be allow'd to signifie here.

We can easily imagine how the admirers of the new scheme would understand what happen'd; but let us enquire what *Isaiah* says of it, who liv'd a long while before our age of liberty and politeness. And we find in the

First place, that he dare not use the name of a Redeemer, and the mystery of salvation, with the freedom that is now contended for, but rather cries out, *Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips.* Very different from the language of those who speak *proud things, and whose lips are their own.* 'Tis a sign he either saw too much, or they see too little; which shews us by the way, that the more we know of Christ Jesus, the greater reverence shall we use in speaking of him. If ever the light of the glorious Gospel breaks out among us, the particular confession of that day will be *the uncleanness of our lips.* However,

Secondly, he gives you the ground of this lamentation: *Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.* If the word King may signifie an office,

yet

yet the other title, the Lord of hosts, is us'd so often, that we should think it a sacred name. Well, *One of the Seraphims flew to him, and laid a live coal upon his mouth, saying, thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purg'd.* This must be by a commission from him, *with whom alone is forgiveness.* After this, he *heard the word of the Lord, saying, whom shall I send? and who will go for us?* That Lord who sat upon the throne, and is call'd by the Angels, the Lord of hosts. And HE *said, go and tell this people, hear ye indeed, and perceive not,* &c. SERM. XXIV.

Now can any text in the Bible express more duty and attendance than the Angels here are said to give? and yet that it may be secure from all plunder of modern interpretations, the Evangelist has quoted these very words, with this remark upon 'em, *These things said Esaias, when he saw* HIS *glory and spake of* HIM: That is, of Christ Jesus: For the story is this, that *tho'* HE *had done so many miracles before 'em, yet they believed not on* HIM, *that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, who has believed our report? And again, they could not believe, because Esaias had said, he has blinded their eyes,* &c. *These things said Esaias, when he saw* HIS *glory,* i. e. in the year that king *Uzziah* died, *and spake of* HIM. The very same God, who being manifest in the flesh, and dwelling among us, *Tho' he was in the world, and the world was made by him, yet the world knew him not.* Joh. xii. 40, 41.

Thus you see this was a doctrine long enough before *Creeds* were ever thought of; and if we would build upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, it must be by a *good confession* of what they have told us. I may plead, as the Apostle does in a lower case, *Say I these things as a man, or saith not the law the same also?* As the ministry we have received is concerning him who is *the true God and eternal life,* so *having obtain'd mercy* 1 Joh. v. 20.

SERM. XXIV. 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4, 5. *we faint not* under all reproach and hardſhip, but *renounce the hidden things of diſhoneſty*, the ſculking artifice of thoſe who have no pleaſure in the truth, who have deſigns that they dare not own. *We walk not in craftineſs, nor handle the word of the Lord deceitfully, but by a manifeſtation of the truth*, and that the greateſt truth of our religion, *commend our ſelves to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God; and if this Goſpel is hid, it is hid to them that are loſt.*

III. The next general head is to conſider it as a MYSTERY, that our God ſhould be ſeen of Angels; and tho' this is objected againſt the doctrine, and makes people look on it as *fooliſhneſs*, yet that need be no ſurpriſe; ſo it ever was, and ſo it ever will be, as long as *the carnal mind is enmity* 1 Cor. ii. 5. *againſt God. We ſpeak wiſdom among them that are perfect: Howbeit not the wiſdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought, but we ſpeak the wiſdom of God in a myſtery, even the hidden wiſdom which God has ordained before the world unto our glory.* You ſee of what nature our doctrine is, and how claſhing it muſt be with the pride of human reaſon; and therefore when perſons are ſo very merry upon a chriſtian's believing what he does not underſtand, and repreſent all that faith as irrational and enthuſiaſtick, one would think they never read what the Apoſtle ſaith, *That the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, but they are fooliſhneſs to him, neither can he know 'em, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcern'd.*

How poorly muſt my text look in the Bible, which is here introduc'd with a heavenly pomp, *Without controverſy, great is the myſtery of godlineſs:* if by *myſtery* we are to underſtand ſomething that is *not wonderful*, and by a *great myſtery* what is no

more than a rational syſtem! and tho' it is ſaid to be myſterious *without controverſy*, yet it ſhall be a controverſy, whether it is any myſtery at all? The glorious doctrines that are wrapt up in this account ſhall be denied, becauſe they are what the Scripture tells us they ſhould be, the great myſteries of godlineſs. Alas! whither are we running! Do you think God would deliver himſelf with all this preparation, and talk of *great myſteries*, when he deſign'd to tell us no more than what we might have had without any revelation? SERM. XXIV.

That Chriſt was manifeſt in the fleſh, is true, for he was made of a woman; but take off his Deity from the report, and where's the myſtery of it? It was none to the *Jews*, when he tells 'em, *ye know not whence I am*, they were ready to anſwer him in the negative, *His father, and mother, and brethren we know, and how ſaith he then, I came down from above?* People may wrangle as long as they will, but if our religion is both deſcrib'd and recommended to us as a *great myſtery*, the myſteriouſneſs of any one doctrine in it can be no objection, becauſe it agrees to what is ſaid of the whole. Now this part of the ſtory, that he was ſeen of Angels is wonderful, in that they admir'd a Saviour whom they did not need, and regarded him in a nature below their own.

1. This was a Saviour of whom they had *no need*, for they never ſinned. I uſe theſe words in a comparative ſenſe, *i. e.* they had not ſuch occaſion for a Redeemer as we have; for it is ſuppoſed, and that with a great deal of evidence, that they are now confirm'd by him, and fix'd in a happineſs of which there will be no ſhadow of turning. Hence they are call'd by one of our names, *the elect Angels*, as choſen of God, not to be redeem'd, but only to be aſſur'd of what they have already.

Now

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Now is it not a wonder, that they who never knew either guilt or misery, any otherwise than by looking on, should so admire a design that only comprehends them at the second-hand? Religion and the great interest of Christianity is recommended to us, by such arguments as these; *I have made known to thee excellent things*, saith *Solomon*, *even to thee; This is not a vain thing*, saith *Moses*, *because it is your life:* We are called to *work out our own salvation.* But none of these reasons can have an influence upon the Spirits about the throne; they being made with a purity always kept it; and yet these are things that *the Angels desire to look into. Behold ye despisers, and wonder, and perish.* How will you escape, if you neglect this great salvation? they admire the way of happiness that was contriv'd for your nature, and yet you refuse it. Will not all the wisdom of that upper world be directed against you? *Call now, if there be any that will answer thee, and to which of the Saints wilt thou turn?*

Prov. xxii. 20.

Deut. xxxii. 47.

Phil. ii. 13.

Acts xiii. 41.

Job v. 1.

2. It farther enhances this wonder, that they should pay so much regard to one who came down into a nature beneath their own. The sin of the devils was *pride*, which some have imagin'd (and they can do no more than imagine it) shew'd it self by refusing offices of service to mankind. Whether it is so or no, the Scripture has not told us; but it is very apparent, the elect Angels are fill'd with no such temper. They have lov'd the place of our dwelling, for *they sung together* at the making of the earth, and *shouted for joy* that there were creatures below themselves. We were then *a little lower* than the Angels, to shew us that it was no great condescension for them to have communion with a nature so well made. But when it is said of our blessed Lord, that he was *lower than the Angels*, there the words signify a greater distance from 'em.

Job xxxviii. 7.

If

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If you understand the Psalmist of *Adam*, his inferiority to the Angels was consistent with immortality; but Christ was made *lower than they for the suffering of death.* The distance between that frail and troublesome life that *he* submitted to, and *their* happiness, is inconceivable by us, who know so little what it is to be like them. Now if they regarded our nature in perfection, as that which was not much beneath 'em, is it not a wonder they look at it in a person who calls himself *a worm and no man!* But they saw in him something above the Angels, as well as beneath 'em. They knew *that he had by inheritance a more excellent name than they.* See him therefore, who had been despis'd and rejected of men, admir'd by the Angels of God. He whom *the builders refus'd*, the wise and learned men had set at nought, *as a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence*, He is the head of the corner. He is in a place which the Angels give way to let him take; for *to none of them has he put in subjection the world to come.* This is what the Scripture has deliver'd to us as a mystery, both in the old and new Testament. *It is the doing of the Lord, and it is marvellous in our eyes.*

Heb. ii. 13.

Ps. xxii. 4.

Matt. xxi. 41, 42.

April 12. 1719.

SERMON XXV.

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I Have no more to do upon this branch of the Christian Religion, than to shew you how it is a mystery of GODLINESS. That, like all the rest, it makes us better, and brings forth fruit to account. That you may consider this in a distinct way, I shall lead you into the two heads of practical holiness, our *duty* and our *comfort*; and let you see, that each of these receive a happy influence from what is said of Christ Jesus in my text, that he *was seen*, or admir'd, and ador'd *of Angels*.

1. The belief of this gives life and soul to our *duty*. 'Tis a doctrine according to godliness, because from hence we are instructed in our worship and reverence to a Redeemer, a couragious profession of his name, a dependence upon his grace as sufficient for us, and a care and love to his people. These, you know, are so many *beauties of holiness*, by which we *adorn the Gospel of God our Saviour*, and whatever brings us into such a practice, must do a friendly part to our religion. 'Tis thus that we *shew forth the praises of him who has call'd us out of darkness into a marvellous light*. You will find that our Lord's being seen of Angels, is a suitable and powerful argument, as will appear by going over the particulars.

1. We

(1.) We are called to the worſhip and reverence of him who is our Redeemer. All believers, *in every place, call upon the name of the Lord Jeſus.* This indeed ſuppoſes that he is GOD, otherwiſe no fulneſs from a creation, no acquir'd glories would make him equal to it; for we *go on in the ſtrength of the Lord, and make mention of his righteouſneſs, even of his only. David* had *none in heaven but the moſt high God*, and no more have we. He alone was to be the *ſtrength of his heart, and his portion for ever*; and all that *went a whoring from him, were to periſh.* Every act of worſhip that is not directed to the Supreme Being, is no better than adultery, a breach of our faith, and a provocation to his jealouſy. 'Tis a principle of natural religion, that none but God is to be worſhip'd; and it is never to be deſtroy'd by any revelation, unleſs we ſuppoſe that God gives up a glory by the Goſpel, which he always kept to himſelf under the Law.

1 Cor. i. 2.

Pſal. lxxi. 16. lxxiii. 25, 26, 27.

I have ſhewn you under the former head, that the Angels pay their fulleſt and moſt proper devotion to him who is *the King of Saints.* I conſider'd the Scriptures that tell us ſo, without any force upon the words in their plain and eaſy ſenſe. I made uſe of no human interpretations to give 'em a biaſs, but laid them before you without any artifice, comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual; and I think, that from this it appears in its native evidence, *that all the Angels of God* do worſhip him; Him who came into the world, and is gone to the Father.

What an argument is this for us to come *under the law to Chriſt!* Well may we ſay of him as *Peter* does to *Cornelius, He is Lord of all.* Not meerly by conſtitution, but antecedent to his appearing in our nature, and collecting to himſelf ſuch a fulneſs of merit. He had *a glory with the Father before*

Act. x. 36.

Joh. xvii. 5.

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fore the world was. Tho' the Apostle takes notice that he came of the *Jews, according to the flesh*, yet he is *over all, God blessed for ever, Amen.* Certainly he does not speak of the one as consequential upon the other; that because he came of the *Jews*, therefore he is above the Angels; and I cannot imagine why such a title does not carry as much in it, as the same words, *chap.* i. 25. when speaking of the *Gentiles*, he saith, *They serve the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever, Amen.* He sets his *Amen* to 'em both. That very name which he gives the most high God, and by which he is distinguished from all the idols in the creation, is, that he is *over all*; as if that was the greatest he could say of him: And must it signify a supremacy of nature in one place, and only an eminent exaltation in another? Shall the words, *over all, blessed for ever,* be the title both of a God and a creature? These clashes of interpretation upon the same phrase make our Apostle guilty of what he abhors and condemns, *uttering words not easy to be understood*, which he calls *speaking to the air*, and that in a matter where a mistake is most fatal.

Rom. ix. 5.

Here you see your company, who they are that lead on the worship of *Messiah the Prince.* We may call upon them as the first rank of servants,

Psal. ciii. 20, 21, 22. *Praise him, all ye Angels, that excel in strength, ye ministers of his that do his pleasure: bless him all ye his hosts, and—— praise this Lord, O my soul.* The Apostle speaks of the devotion that Christ has above, as an universal thing, that it runs thro' the creation, it reaches as far as religion it self does;

Phil. ii. 10. where-ever there is any worship, he has it. *In the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father.* The argument loses none

none of its force from the last expression; for it is certain, that all the duty we pay to Christ is to the glory of God the Father. When *the Son of man is glorified, God is glorified in him; and if God is glorified in him, God does also glorify him in himself.* But the question is, whether this bowing the knee, and confessing with the tongue, does not go as far as either ours or the angelick nature can do in a way of homage. SERM. XXV. John xiii. 31, 32.

That you may take the full meaning of these words, observe their situation in other parts of Scripture. They are plainly fetch'd out of *Isa.* xlv. 22, 23. *Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth.* Whether this is the Father, or the Son that calls, the argument is still the same; because the reason he gives for the dependence of the whole world is this, *I am the* LORD, *and there is none else.* That's the character which he maintains, and will not part with, *I have sworn by myself, and the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return: that unto* ME *every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear.* You see in this resolution, he declares himself to be *God*, and that there is *none else;* and shall this homage be paid to another which he demands to himself as the *only God?* Can we imagine, after such a declaration of his being *alone* in the Deity, that he would alienate any of that honour which he speaks of here as his peculiar?

Nay, methinks this is mention'd as belonging to Christ with great enlargements; for by the prophet it is only demanded from *the ends of the earth*, every knee, and every tongue *there* have their duty allotted 'em; but *here* we read of *things in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth*, that they are all bowing and praising. The Apostle, in his Epistle to the *Romans*, makes these accounts signify our appearance at his tribunal; *We shall stand before the* Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 12.

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judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, as I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then, every one of us shall give an account of himself to God. Standing before the judgment-seat of Christ, is giving an account of our selves to God, and the proof we have of it, are those words out of the old Testament, which are plainly affirm'd of a Redeemer in the new.

See therefore how you ought to consider your great Saviour, and with what a compass a believer may send out his summons. *Praise him from the heavens, praise him in the heights; praise him, all ye his Angels, praise him, all ye his hosts. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth, who hast set thy glory above the heavens!* What a pattern is here for your duty? Well may they that *stand upon a sea of glass,* and have got the victory over the beast and his name, cry out as they do, *Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are all thy ways, thou King of Saints, who would not fear thee, and glorify thy name!* Do what you find the Angels have always done; *Obey his commandments, and hearken to the voice of his words;* bow before him with reverence and a godly fear. *Give glory to him who is worthy to be prais'd;* and be sure to come into the great consort. *Every creature that is in heaven, and in the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that is in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be to him that sits on the throne, and to the* LAMB *for ever and ever.*

Ps. cxlviii. 1, 2.

viii. 1.

Rev. xv. 3, 4.

Ps. ciii. 20.

Rev. v. 13.

(2.) Another act of our duty is a couragious profession of his name. 'Tis not enough that *with the heart man believes unto righteousness,* but *confession must be made to salvation:* Therefore *if thou believe in thine heart the Lord Jesus, and confess with thy mouth that God rais'd him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* This supposes that the acknowledgment of

Rom. x. 10.

of the myſtery carries in it a danger. We are told of times when people *would not endure ſound doctrine*; and miniſters are either to quit their Goſpel or their reputation. If they will not bring down revelation to mens reaſon, and the rules of life to their luſts, they ſhall have the run of hell and earth againſt 'em. *Briars and thorns are with 'em, and they dwell among ſcorpions.* We are bid not to be *diſmay'd at their looks.* None of us is ſufficient for theſe things. SERM. XXV. 2 Tim. iv. 3. Ezek. ii. 6.

The Apoſtle thought it needful to exhort *Timothy* in an evil day, *Be not thou aſhamed of the teſtimony of the Lord, nor of me his priſoner, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Goſpel, according to the power of God*; and in the ſame Epiſtle he takes notice of the different carriage he had met with among profeſſors. He ſaith of *Oneſiphorus, He ſought me out diligently, and was not aſhamed of my chain.* But every one had not that integrity, *At his firſt anſwer, all men forſook him, no man ſtood by him*; and as he begs that couragious profeſſor might *find mercy of the Lord in that day*, ſo he prays God for the reſt of 'em, that it *might not be laid to their charge.* 2 Tim. i. 9. ch. iv. 16.

The Scripture has expreſt a great deal of value for what we do in teſtimony to the ways and cauſe of a Redeemer under the ſtriſe of tongues. He ſays to a church at *Pergamos, Thou heldeſt faſt my name, and haſt not denied my faith.* When that name was going, they renewed their catch, and took faſter hold of it. The ſame is obſerv'd of thoſe in *Philadelphia, I know thy works, I have ſet before thee an open door, and no man can ſhut it*; *for thou haſt a little ſtrength, and haſt kept my word, and haſt not denied my name*; and he bids 'em continue ſo, *Behold I come quickly, hold that faſt which thou haſt, that no man take thy crown.* Rev. ii. 13. ch. iii. 8. ver. 11.

To this glorious part of our duty, we are led by the conſideration of what the Angels do. They

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were not asham'd of him in the wilderness when he hungred, and in the garden when he fainted; they made no secret of his perfections; they came out as the armies of heaven against the *dragon* and his Angels, who assail a Redeemer's throne. See therefore what a number of professors you have to go before you. Remember the terror of that threatning, *Whoever shall be asham'd of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the son of man be asham'd, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy Angels.* Luk. ix. 26. Observe here the nature of our temptation; the opposition we receive is from adulterers and sinners; the former are in jest with all religion, and the latter are in earnest against it; so that from such a mixture you may expect a trial of *cruel mockings;* and if they can reach to it, *of scourgings, and bonds, and imprisonments.*

Carnal security will plead with a great deal of reason against the dangers of a profession then. "What signifies speaking for Christ in a lewd and "scandalous age? I shall only be laught at." Well, but if God has plac'd you among these people, he expects you shall appear for him. 'Tis not enough that you say I love a Saviour, I'm not weary of him; the crime here mention'd, is being *asham'd of him.* Perhaps you will say, that you are not, you value his person, and speak well of his name. Well, but if you're asham'd of *his words*, of the revelation that he has given, it's all the same thing. You're to stick by his doctrine against all the sneer and banter of ungodly men; and if you do not, he will look as shy upon you, as you do upon him; and that, at a time when you will want to be own'd; he will be *asham'd of you before the Angels*, and tell them, "There stands a sneaking pro- "fessor, one who held the truth in unrighteousness, "who was more tender of his own name than he

"was

" was of mine; he had rather my glory ſhould SERM.
" ſuffer a robbery than his own reputation a blot. XXV.
" Deſpiſe him, O ye Angels, let not ſuch a cow-
" ard come into the armies of heaven: Let *the* Rev. xxi 8.
" *fearful and unbelieving*, and abominable and mur-
" derers, and all liars, have their part in the lake
" that burns with fire and brimſtone." But how glorious is the reverſe to this ſentence, *Whoſoever ſhall confeſs me before men, him ſhall the Son of man confeſs before the Angels of God*? For the King himſelf to own you in the face of the whole Court, to tell the ſurrounding Angels, " There is one
" who forgot every intereſt but Mine, and every
" Friend but Me; receive him among your ſelves,
" he as well as you has *kept the word of God, and*
" *teſtimony of Jeſus*.

Thus the *trial of your faith* will be *found unto* 1 Pet. i. 7.
praiſe and glory at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt. What ſignifies bowing to the humour of thoſe who *de-* Jam. ii. 4.
ſpiſe that worthy name by which you are call'd? What is their favour worth? This *praiſe of men*, that you love more than the praiſe of God, is nothing but a little putrify'd breath: But give all things the reputation they will have at laſt, and 'tis enough if the zeal that is now condemn'd comes then to be admir'd. *With me it is a very ſmall thing that* 1 Cor. iv.
I ſhould be judg'd of man's judgment; but the Lord 3, 5.
will come, and bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and make manifeſt the counſels of all hearts, and then ſhall every man have praiſe of God. " May my
" ſoul be under thoſe powers of a world to come,
" and act in the whole profeſſion of a Miniſter and
" a Chriſtian, with a view to ſuch an acknowledg-
" ment before the Angels of heaven.

(3.) From his being ſeen of Angels, in the way that I have deſcrib'd, we are encourag'd in our dependence upon his grace, as that which is *ſufficient for us*. They admire him as *worthy to receive* Rev. v.
honour, 13.

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honour, and glory, and strength, and salvation, and power, and blessing; as one who by the blood of his cross has *reconcil'd unto himself things in heaven, and things on earth,* and therefore here is enough for our confidence.

To this purpose, I would lead your thoughts to a Scripture that has really suffer'd by our translation, and ought to have the sense of it retriev'd. 'Tis *Col.* i. 19. He speaks there of Christ Jesus, as having *in all things the pre-eminence,* or the government among all persons; and then saith, *for it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell.* Thus we read it in our Bible, but there is no such word as Father in the *Greek.* [d]Ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδόκησε πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι All fulness pleas'd to dwell in him; or, it pleas'd himself, all fullness should dwell there. For we find the following verses return the several actions upon himself, though our translation having made a mistake in one clause, carries it through the rest. Καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ ἀποκαταλλάξαι τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτὸν, εἰρηνοποιήσας διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ· εἴτε τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς εἴτε τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. That word εἰρηνοποιήσας, *making peace,* may be affirm'd of Christ, of whom it is further said, that δι' αὐτοῦ, *by himself, he reconciles all things,* εἰς αὐτὸν, *to himself. Nay, in the body of his flesh thro' death, he is to present you holy and blameless, and unreproveable,* κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ, *in his own sight.*

So that, tho' the doctrine of the same person's both *making* and *receiving* satisfaction is laught at, yet it is the plain language of this text, as well as several others. *He presents us to himself;* he keeps us from falling, *and presents us in the presence of his own glory with exceeding joy.* He *reconciles* things in heaven; if you understand that of the Angels, it signifies a confirmation in the original happiness of their nature: and he who could establish them

Eph. v. 25.

Jude 24.

can

can *pardon* you. If there is grace enough to keep the Angels from falling, as several thousands of their partners have done, certainly there is sufficient to keep you by the mighty power of this God *thro' faith unto salvation.* SERM. XXV.

(4.) Here's an argument for your care and love to the people of a Redeemer. If the Angels for his sake are *sent forth as ministring Spirits* to them, will you think it below you to love and attend 'em? Remember, they are *heirs of salvation*, the children of a King, *joint-heirs with Christ*, the price of blood, the candidates for glory. The Spirits that stand round the throne don't think it any reproach to come down among 'em. *They encamp round about them that fear the Lord, to deliver 'em.* Ps. xxxiv. 10. 'Tis strange, that the heavenly guards should pitch their tents upon earth, and do it, not where God's people liv'd in prosperity, but they go to the poorest person, and into the darkest holes. They are employ'd to shut *the lion's mouth in a den*, to fetch an Apostle out *of a dungeon*, to take up a *beggar* perhaps from a rich man's gates. The last news we heard of *Lazarus*, was, that no creature own'd him besides the *dogs who lick'd his sores*; and the next account tells us he is in the arms of Angels to carry up his soul.

See therefore how aukward a thing that loftiness of temper is that some people love to be distinguish'd by. They never learn'd this from the Angels. It's not the court-air. It's quite out of fashion in heaven, to *despise one of these little ones, for their Angels do always behold the face of our Father which is in heaven.* They have creatures to take care of 'em, who look God in the face. Let these noble examples teach you, as *the elect of God, to put on bowels of mercy, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another.* Learn thus to be generous, to be pitiful and courteous, going Col. iii. 12.

SERM. XXV. ing about like ſo many Angels upon earth, doing good to all men, eſpecially as they do, *to the houſhold of faith.*

2. We learn from our Lord's being ſeen of Angels what will be matter of *comfort* to us, under any dangers by a profeſſion, any troubles for the imperfection of grace, our concern in a dying hour, and our unbelief about a reſurrection and a future happineſs.

(1.) We may be expos'd to great dangers in our profeſſion, as I have already ſuppos'd. It is your duty to *ſtand faſt in the faith, to quit your ſelves like men, and be ſtrong*; and if we had no more for it, than the word of our General and Captain of ſalvation, *Have not I commanded you?* it is enough to a good ſoldier of Chriſt. But he has not left himſelf without a witneſs; we have arguments of another ſort: For as the *battel is the Lord's*, ſo in a little while you ſhall know the joys of thoſe that *divide the ſpoil*. This flows from every fountain of doctrine, all the truths of religion are to give you a *hope in believing*; but there is a particular force in the ſubject of my text.

You appear for him who has all the Angels in heaven to appear for him. You do not ſee either him or them, that would confound your zeal, and prevent your faith; but they are about you, tho' inviſible. The prophet *Eliſha* knew this, when his ſervant ſaw the chariots and horſes invading the city, he cries out, *Alas, my maſter, how ſhall we do?* He has this anſwer, *Fear not, for they that be with us, are more than they that be with them.* He might have ſaid, there is a greater force with us, if he had ſpoke of no more than one Angel; but he really inſiſts upon a *greater number*, as appear'd to be fact; for when the young man's eyes were open'd, *Behold the mountain was full of horſes and chariots of fire about Eliſha.* Indeed the Apoſtle goes

2 Kin. vi. 15, 16.

goes upon a higher argument than this, *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.* And shall they who profess under so glorious a Head, and are join'd with so noble an army, be ashamed of what they do? No, we have *a High-priest over the house of God;* one who has the government there, for he is *a Priest upon his throne.* From this the Apostle makes two conclusions; *first,* that we *draw nigh with a true heart*: and, *secondly,* that we *hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.* The one of these is as necessary as the other. A man is as much obliged to keep standing in the field, as kneeling to the throne: and what are we to hold fast? not only our faith, as a principle, or a doctrine, but the *very profession* of it, ἀκλινῆ, without wavering, without any declension or turning from the truth, as it is in Jesus. This is a part of your homage to that High-priest who is over the house of God.

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1 John iv. 4.

Heb. x. 21, 22.

Remember, therefore, if you *contend for the faith once delivered to the saints,* you have a good cause, a glorious Head, and a vast alliance: And tho' there are many who *turn away their ears from the truth, and are turn'd unto fables,* yet *watch in all things, endure afflictions.* For there is *a crown of righteousness* laid up for all those who *love his appearing.* And what appearing is that, but of *a righteous judge?* All Scripture agrees in this, *The heavens declare his righteousness, for God is judge himself.* We come to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to God the judge of all; and therefore, when we look for that *blessed hope, it is the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.* You may well bear a testimony to the character under which you expect him. *Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his Saints, to execute judgment*

2 Tim. iv. 4, 5.

Psal. l. 6.

Jud 14, 15.

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upon all, and to convince them of their ungodly deeds, and hard speeches which they have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speakes great swelling words, having mens persons in admiration because of advantage.

(2.) We are sometimes troubled at the imperfection of our graces, and the darkness of our evidence; and this sits heavier upon a believer, than all the noise and rattle of the world against him. He does not complain so much, that *without are fightings*, as that *within are fears*. Now the doctrine I'm upon, opens *a door of hope in this valley of Achor*, and it's this, that tho' Christ do suffer your graces to be weak, and your comforts to be interrupted, yet he that has done so much for the *Angels* will not be unmindful of *you*.

In some sense we may suppose them under the fears of falling away. They had *no covenant* order'd in all things and sure, 'till he *reconcil'd* to himself what is now in heaven. Now there's one argument, that may encourage our expectation of such a favour above theirs. We may say as the men of *Israel* did to those of *Judah*, *We have ten parts in the king, he is nearer of kin to us:* He is *rather* ours than theirs; for *verily he took not on him the nature of Angels, but the seed of Abraham.* And therefore if he has done so generously by a nature that he never took into the relation, what may not we hope for from him who took part of our flesh and blood? Don't imagine that he who establish'd *them* has left his people here below unsettled; no, the time is a coming on, when your graces shall be like those of the Angels, entire and perfect, and when your comforts shall also equal theirs, both in their fullness and security.

Heb. ii. 14.

3. This

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3. This is a support under the terrors of a dying hour. The believer may say, "This is what "I'm not us'd to, I have had grace to hear and "to pray with, but never to die with. This is "following my God *in a way that is not sown*, and "a road that I have not trod. Now my feet are "coming *upon the dark mountains.* I am to find "that which never enter'd into my experience be-"fore, and never will do again. I have often re-"sisted Satan, but if the last battel turns on his "side, all the rest will prove in vain." I don't tell you such a case ought not to strike you with awe. A man that makes a jest of death, was never in earnest for heaven: But this I will tell you, from him whose word alone you're to take in it, that he whose you are, will never leave you nor forsake you.

Angels have been your *ministring spirits* before, and they will be so at last. You have found their care in a pinching world, you shall have it again. Satan will be your enemy, 'tis the concluding stroke, and therefore may be the most awful. But here are contending Spirits that will give him battel, and they are sent forth to minister unto them who shall be the heirs of salvation. This they have done all along; but their service is with a particular zeal, when those *heirs* are just going to take possession. If they own'd you in a distant title, in a claim that was not to be answer'd for several years, will they be unconcern'd when you get out of minority, and have but a few moments between you and the full inheritance?

(4.) This deserves to be your comfort under any doubts about a resurrection, or a future happiness. He who is *the resurrection and the life,* and is call'd so among other reasons, because it shall be brought about by the power of his voice, and the authority of his command, (He) has Angels to behold him, looking

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looking at his face to take his orders, as well as to admire his glory. Make no objections about the manner how the graves are to be open'd, and the dust awaken'd into a second life; how souls who have liv'd loose and free in heaven shall come down again into their old habitations. These are mysteries, and would be no better than dreams, if we had not the word of a *God that cannot lie.*

But the difficulties that appear in such things are gone, if you do but consider that Angels are the officers, and Christ the guide of the whole concern. What is there which they cannot execute, when he thinks fit to command it? He is *reveal'd from heaven with his mighty Angels.* And from hence you may also conclude the happiness both of soul and body. He is now *seen of Angels*, and he shall be seen of you. You're his own, *the ransom'd of the Lord*, which they never were. Tho' he has done more for them in their creation, yet his love and pity has exceeded towards you in redemption; and therefore 'tis no wonder if with his original servants he also bring in his *purchase* and his *chosen*; for they, as well as the Angels, *shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads.*

2 Thess. i. 9.

Rev. xxii. 4.

SER-

SERMON XXVI.

Apr. 26. 1719.

1 TIM. III. 16.

— Preached unto the Gentiles.

IN, these words we enter upon the *fourth* SERM. *branch* of this great mystery, that pro- XXVI. motes our godliness, and secures our salvation. We have heard of Christ, *First*, that he was *manifested*; *Secondly*, that he was *justified*; *Thirdly*, that he was *seen*; and now *Fourthly*, that he is *preach'd of.* These are so many ways of spreading out his name, and serving the mighty purpose of redemption that he came about. His *manifestation* was to all those in *Judea*, who saw him, and heard him: he *ever spake openly* Joh. xviii. *in the temple and synagogues, whither the Jews did al-* 20. *ways resort:* he was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld him. His *justification* is more inward, and refers us to a secret witness, the testimony that is deliver'd and impress'd upon the souls of his people; for Christ is *in us as our hope of* Col. i. 27. *glory.*

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glory. He was manifeſt *in the fleſh*, by appearing in the reality of our nature; but he is juſtified *in the Spirit*, which reaches no farther than a principle of religion does: he's *glorified in his Saints, and admir'd in them that believe*.

But, beſides theſe two, He is *ſeen* and *preach'd of*. Seen no longer by us: for tho' we have known Chriſt after the fleſh, *henceforth we know him no more*. The heavens have receiv'd him till the time of the reſtitution of all things. He's one *whom*
1 Pet. i. 6. *having not ſeen we love, and in whom, tho' now we*
1 Tim. vi. *ſee him not, yet believing we rejoyce. He dwells in*
16. *the light which none can approach to, whom no man has ſeen, nor can ſee*. But yet he is ſeen in the glory of his Perſon, the fulneſs of his reward, and the vaſt compaſs of his deſign. In all theſe he is *ſeen of Angels*, the things relating to him are what *they*
1 Pet. i. 12. *deſire to look into*. They are miniſtring Spirits about his throne, beholding his face in righteouſneſs, and ſatisfied with his likeneſs. We at preſent are that part of the family that cannot ſee him:
2 Cor. v. 7. *We walk by faith, and not by ſight*. He has left our world, and keeps in his hands *the keys of the invi-*
Rev. i. 18. *ſible ſtate*; and therefore in this abſence of his Perſon, and the impoſſibility of having a full viſion, he has taken another way to begin, and keep up his acquaintance with us: *He is preach'd among the Gentiles*.

The ſucceſs of this we have in the next branch of our religion, that *he is believ'd on in the world*. The one is the counterpart to the other. *Preaching* is telling mankind what he is, *believing* is taking in the report, which goes a great deal farther than merely giving our aſſent to the truth of it; for it moulds and forms the ſoul to what we hear.
2 Cor. iii. 18. Whilſt we look at his glory, we are *chang'd into the ſame image*. Believing is feeling as well as hearing. And this is ſo much the great buſineſs of religion,

ligion, that you find the holy Spirit has given us two branches of the myſtery upon one head of honour that is done to Chriſt in the world. We have the means of bringing it about, and that is *preaching* him to the Gentiles, and then the happy event of theſe methods, that he is *believ'd on* among thoſe that fear him. SERM. XXVI.

I'm now calling your thoughts to the former of theſe; which, as I ſaid before, contains the fourth branch of the chriſtian religion: He was *preach'd among the Gentiles.* I muſt obſerve to you, as I have done all along, that the report is made in the form of a hiſtory concerning the ſame Perſon who had been mention'd before; ſo that the method, into which I ſhall caſt my deſign from this part of the verſe, will not be very different from that I have taken in the whole ſubject.

1. To give you ſome account of what is here affirm'd, that he was preach'd unto the Gentiles.

2. To ſhew you that this belongs to him as a GOD; He of whom theſe things are ſaid, can be no other than the Supreme Being.

3. That there is ſomething in it myſterious and wonderful, exceeding the comprehenſion of human reaſon.

4. That the deſign of this doctrine, and the virtue that attends it, is to promote *godlineſs* in all manner of converſation: 'tis an opinion that brings forth fruit to account.

I. I'm to explain the thing itſelf that's here ſaid of Chriſt Jeſus; that the *God* who was manifeſt in the fleſh, juſtified in the Spirit, and ſeen of Angels, is now *preach'd unto the Gentiles.* There are two particulars under this head.

1. That Chriſt is *preach'd:* and,

2. That this is done *among the Gentiles.*

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1. What is the import of the expreſſion, that he was *preach'd?* The word ſignifies the office of a herald, or, as ſome think, of an ambaſſador; and it comprehends no leſs than this, that he employs people to make him known, and give a publication to the glorious deſign that he came upon. *Thus it is written,* ſaith he to his diſciples, *and thus it behov'd Chriſt to ſuffer, and to riſe from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remiſſion of ſins ſhould be preach'd in his name among all nations, and ye are witneſſes of theſe things.* To the ſame purpoſe they ſay, *We are witneſſes of theſe things, and ſo is the holy Ghoſt. He ſhew'd himſelf unto witneſſes, who did eat and drink with him after he roſe from the dead, and commanded them to preach unto the people, and to teſtifie, it is He who is ordain'd of God to be the judge of quick and dead.* The name of preachers that he has given to theſe his ſervants, leads us into the nature of their duty, and the tendency it has to bring on the happineſs of the world. Their preaching takes into it theſe following particulars: declaring him to be the only Mediator between God and man; repreſenting his ſufficiency to anſwer all the danger of our ſouls; doing this in the plaineſt and moſt open way; ſhewing his willingneſs to ſave thoſe that are loſt; perſuading people to come unto him; aſſerting his right over the whole creation, and eſpecially the church; and doing all this with an eye to that ſtate where *his* glory ſhall be ſeen, and *ours* be compleat.

Luke xxiv. 46, 47, 48.

Acts v. 32. x 41, 42.

This is preaching: 'tis thus we *fulfil the miniſtry that we have receiv'd, and teſtifie the Goſpel of the grace of God.* He that puts the brethren in mind of theſe things, is *a good miniſter, nouriſh'd up in the words of ſound doctrine.* Satan would direct our thoughts and zeal to ſomething elſe; but the Apoſtle ſaith to *Timothy, Meditate upon theſe things, give thyſelf wholly to 'em,* ἐν τούτοις ἴσθι be in 'em, live there,

Acts xx. 24.

1 Tim. iv. 6.

ver. 15, 16.

there, *that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed* SERM. XXVI.
to thyself, and to thy doctrine; continue in 'em ἐπίμενε ἐν αὐτοῖς in those fundamental truths which make up that doctrine; *for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.*

(1.) To preach Christ, is to declare that he is the only Mediator between God and man: and when this is preach'd among the Gentiles, it is to turn 'em from the error of their way, and the vile abominations they were got into. They had a multitude of Deities, and as great a number of intercessors; *There be that are called gods, whether in heaven* 1 Cor. viii. *or in earth, as there be gods many, and Lords many*; 3. but Christianity was to strike 'em off from all this dangerous impertinence in the greatest concern of their lives, and to tell 'em, that *to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.* These are the main principles of our religion, that there is *but one God,* 1 Tim. ii. *and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ* 5, 6, 7. *Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, whereof,* saith he, *I am ordain'd a Preacher, and an Apostle, a Teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.*

This is that doctrine which he sent his servants round about the world with, that *there is salvation* Acts iv. *in no other, nor any other name given under heaven* 12. *among men by which we can be saved.* It's what he press'd upon the *Jews* in his own ministry: *All that came before me are thieves and robbers, but the* Joh. x. 8. *sheep did not hear 'em:* and again, *If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. John the Baptist* had before this been like *the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths strait: One comes after me, who is before me: He whom God has sent, speaks the words of God, for God gives not the Spirit by measure to*

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him; what he has seen and heard, that he testifies, and no man receives his testimony: he that has receiv'd his testimony, has set to his seal that God is true.

Joh. iii. 32, 33.

It's a going off from the simplicity of the christian religion, and indeed the whole design upon which we have it, for us to talk of any other Mediator besides him, who was in all points tempted as we are. He keeps the work intirely in his own hands, and will have it said of none but himself, that *he is the way, the truth and the life, and that none comes to the Father but by him.* And therefore, it is part of our ministry to shew, that *this is He of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write.* He that in the fulness of time was made of a woman, is that *seed of the woman* who should break the serpent's head, *Who was verily fore-ordain'd before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.* 'Twas of him whom we now preach, that God spake to the Patriarchs; for *the Scripture foreseeing that God would justifie the heathen thro' faith, preach'd before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.* 'Tis he of whom *David* speaks; for *he being a prophet knew that God would of his loins raise up Christ to sit on his throne.* He is the root that should come forth out of the stem of *Jesse*, and the branch that should grow out of his roots, *the bright and morning star, the root and offspring of David.* In a word, it is he who was promis'd of God to the Fathers; he that should come, neither look we for another. And from this we are never to depart, being *servants to God in the Gospel of his Son, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declar'd to be the Son of God with power by the Spirit of holiness in the resurrection from the dead.*

xiv. 6.

1 Pet. i. 20.

Gal. iii. 8.

Acts ii. 30.

Rom. i. 3, 4.

(2.) When we preach Christ, we represent him as sufficient to answer all the danger that our souls

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are in. The poor heathen had a wild way of explaining the fall of man, and the redemption that God is carrying on, and yet they had some confus'd apprehensions about it. They saw that he who made 'em was angry with 'em; they felt a depravity in their manners; they strove to procure the Divine favour by sacrifice and offering; and the more devout any people were, the greater expence did they run into; so that the doctrine of original sin, and a satisfaction to the justice of God, seems to have made some general impressions upon our whole nature. They knew so much, that we had undone ourselves, and that it was not in our own power to become happy again. SERM. XXVI.

Now, we must tell the heathen, and all mankind, that every contrivance to set ourselves aright with God, fell short of the design. We have nothing wherewith to *come before the Lord, and bow ourselves to the most high God*; *thousands of rams, and ten thousand rivers of oyl* was a great deal for us to give, but too little for him to take. Giving *the first-born for our transgression, the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul*, was the highest act of self-denial; but it could be no better than atoning for one sin by another, for a less by a greater. Christianity is to tell the world that all this will not do, that such a profusion of treasure and blood may be spar'd for two reasons. *First*, because they are not sufficient to answer the ends: and, *Secondly*, because there is something else to prevent 'em. Christ has by one offering, for ever perfected them that are sanctified. The devotions under the law were to be repeated yearly, monthly, and daily; but as they had no more than a typical virtue, so the substance they refer to being come, there's an end of 'em: *Thro' this man is preach'd the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified* Mic. vi. 6, 7. Acts xiii. 38, 39.

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from all things; from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.

We are to tell mankind, that here is One *able* Heb. vii. 25. *to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them:* that there needs no more sacrifice by way of atone- ix. 26. ment. He appear'd *once in the end of the world, to put away sin by the offering of himself.* He is a high priest of good things to come; and not by the blood of bulls and goats, which being imperfect, must be renew'd, but *by his own blood he enter'd into the holiest of all, having obtain'd eternal redemption for us.*

And as he has carried along with him a merit that will be the foundation of perpetual claims, so he has the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily. He wants for no grace to make you a *willing* people, no more than for a righteousness to Col. ii. 10. make you a *pardon'd* people: *You are complete in him who is the head of all principality and power.* He can begin his work upon the most unlikely persons, he can carry it on thro' the greatest dangers; Jude 1. for *we are preserv'd in Christ Jesus, and call'd.* This is the good news that we bring to a desolate 1 Joh. v. 19. world which lies in wickedness, ὑπὸ τῷ πονηρῷ under the power of the wicked one, to tell 'em that they may be sav'd, that God has laid help on him that is mighty; *an interpreter, one among a thousand.* He is gracious to 'em, having found out a ransom, and so they are deliver'd from going Rom. viii 4. down to the pit. We tell the *Jews*, that *what the law could not do, in that it was weak thro' the flesh,* is now brought about in a better and an easier way. *God has sent forth his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and by making him a sacrifice for sin, has condemn'd it in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law may be fulfill'd in them that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

3. Preaching

(3.) Preaching Christ is telling these things in the plainest and most open way we can. The ministry of *John the Baptist* is call'd φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ the voice of one crying or shouting in the wilderness. 'Tis the publication that he gives to the world, as it was foretold in the very prophesie that refers to *John*; *The voice said, Cry: O Zion, that bringest good tydings, get thee up into the high mountain*, from whence they may spread out the report, *O Jerusa'em, that bringest good tydings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid, say to the cities of Judah*, BEHOLD YOUR GOD. SERM. XXVI. Isa. xl. 6, 9.

The doctrine we are charg'd with in particular, is the Deity of our Saviour. All the descriptions that we have of the ministerial work, represent it as contriv'd on purpose to tell the news abroad: *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings good tydings, that publishes peace, that brings good tydings of good, that publishes sa'vation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord brings again Zion. The Lord has made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our* GOD. Therefore for us to be either afraid or unwilling to testifie of him whom we are sent out to proclaim, is not making full proof of our ministry; tis actually undoing what we are set apart for. For *a necessity is laid upon us, yea, woe unto us, if we preach not the Gospel.* We have in Christ Jesus the great example, as well as the glorious object of our ministry: *I have preached righteousness*, saith he, *in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest: I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart, I have declar'd thy faithfulness and thy salvation, I have not conceal'd thy loving kindness, and thy truth from the great congregation.* Isa. lii 7, 8, 10. 1 Cor. ix. 16. Ps. xl. 10.

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Ministers are *set for the defence of the Gospel* as well as morality. As they must blow the trumpet to warn sinners, and bid 'em turn from the evil of their ways, lest that blood be requir'd at their hands; so when the time comes that people will *not endure* 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4. *sound doctrine, they are to watch in all things. to endure afflictions, to do the work of evangelists, and make full proof of their ministry.* There is such a thing as betraying the faith that was once deliver'd to the Saints; and if this is the crime of those who are charg'd to *hold fast the faithful word*, what can they expect when the chief Shepherd shall appear?

It is an argument, and a very powerful one to flesh and blood, that the doctrines of the Gospel being run down as nonsense, cannot be maintain'd without danger; but a minister, who has any *use* of that faith that he talks of, who makes that world the place of his conversation, which is the subject of his report, will have an answer to every objec- Acts xx. 24. tion that rises from below: *Bonds and afflictions*, saith the Apostle, *do in every city abide me, but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and fulfil the ministry that I have receiv'd, and testifie the Gospel of the grace of God.* He charges the *Colossians* Col. iv. 17. to say to *Archippus*, *Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received of the Lord, that thou fulfil it*; and is that by being silent in the cause, and unconcern'd what becomes of the truth as it is in Jesus? Eph. iii. 9. No, it's our business to *make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery that from the beginning of the world has been hid in God.*

We are so far from being asham'd to talk of mysteries, tho' we are laught at for it, that we must tell 'em our ministry consists of these, and we endeavour to make 'em see 'em, and what fellowship there is in 'em; that there is something communi-

cated *by* such doctrines, and deriv'd *from* 'em. Tho' they are above the comprehension of reason, yet they are prepar'd to nourish and feed the soul. Whether people will hear, or whether they will forbear, we must let 'em know, that Christianity is a great deal more than the best instructions for duty, and lessons for practice. There is an unintelligible part in it, what the Apostle here calls a *mystery*, that from the beginning was hid with Christ in God.

It is no argument for us to be silent upon these heads, because the world will not *endure sound doctrine*. When a truth is run down, it's a time for you to *hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering*. You must not *believe every spirit, but* 1 Joh. iv. 1. *try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world*. The Apostle *Paul* had as much prudence as any man, and yet you find how he conducts himself in his ministry. When he is call'd to preach before *Felix*, the pride and injustice of that person direct him to speak of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come. When he came to *Athens*, he struck at their darling practice; for in all things they were *too superstitious*, and tells 'em, *The God whom ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you, for we ought not to think the Godhead is like to silver and gold: he dwells not in temples made with hands*. And even among them he preaches *Christ Jesus, and the resurrection from the dead*, tho' they had call'd him a *babbler, and a setter forth of strange Gods*. And when he comes upon this subject again, as he speaks of *the resurrection, some mocked, and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter*. When he preach'd to the *Jews*, he knew no doctrine would be so grating to them as *Jesus Christ, and him crucified*. This was their *stone of stumbling*, the thing they could not get over, and yet thus he employ'd his ministry

Acts xvii. 22, 25.

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stry among 'em. When he went to *Theſſalonica*, as his manner was, he goes into the ſynagogue, *opening and alledging, that Chriſt muſt needs have ſuffer'd, and that this Jeſus whom I preach unto you is Chriſt.* Thus he did to the *Jews* at *Rome*, tho' they *contradicted and blaſphem'd the things that he ſpake*, yet he held on. No reputation of his own was of any value with him; he threw *all that* into the future glory.

Acts xvii. 3.

'Tis a poor reaſon for miniſters to conceal their faith, becauſe others will not hear it. We read of quite another conduct: *Certain falſe brethren were unawares brought in, who came in privily to ſpy out the liberty that we have in Chriſt Jeſus, that they might bring us into bondage, to whom we gave place by ſubjection, no not for an hour, that the truth of the Goſpel might continue with you.* You ſee it was this that he had moſt at heart; and there's no fulfilling of our miniſtry, without a faithfulneſs to it. He could not have bid the elders of *Epheſus* farewel with that confidence, if he had not born his teſtimony againſt all oppoſition: for, *after the manner of men, he fought with beaſts at Epheſus.* But he could ſay at parting, *I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.* Why! *for I have not ſhunn'd to declare unto you all the counſel of God.* He did not ſhun to declare any part of it. The counſel of God certainly takes in the myſteries of religion, and in particular the glory of Chriſt, whoſe names are *Wonderful, Counſellor.* Had he ſhunn'd to declare this, he had been guilty, polluted with the blood of men. But upon the openneſs of his miniſtry about *theſe things*, he calls them to record, that he was pure: that whatever blot he went away with, there could be none upon the account of any unfaithfulneſs in his work. He might have a great deal of the *reproach* of men, but none of their *blood* ſtuck to him; that fell all upon

Gal. ii. 4, 5.

Acts xx. 17.

upon their own heads. " There's nothing that " can have more dread of in my miniſtry, than " that I ſhould have ſaid too little of Chriſt, and " not have been zealous enough for the glory " of his name." Happy are they who are witneſſes for him, and neither aſham'd of his perſon nor his words before an adulterous and ſinful generation. They ſhall find that he will be a *faithful and true witneſs* to them. *Who is that faithful and wiſe ſervant, whom his Lord has made ruler over his houſhold, to give 'em their meat in due ſeaſon? Bleſſed is that ſervant whom his Lord when he comes ſhall find ſo doing: verily I ſay unto you, that he ſhall make him ruler over all his goods.* SERM. XXVI. Mat. xxiv. 45, 46, 47.

(4.) We preach Chriſt as one who is willing to ſeek and ſave that which is loſt. We cannot leave out his goodneſs when we talk of a Redeemer: *Herein he has commended his love towards us, in that when we were yet ſinners, he died for us.* We are indeed to inſiſt upon the terrors of the Lord, that, *as many as are under the law, are under the curſe:* that a ſatisfaction muſt be made to the juſtice of God; for, *without ſhedding of blood there is no remiſſion.* But theſe things are ſo far from contradicting what is ſaid of the love of Chriſt, that they rather exalt it. We cannot have a greater evidence of the regard he has to our nature, than when he was pleas'd to live in it, and to die with it. That he came down a little lower than the Angels, not (as *Adam* was made) to live in all the fulneſs of paradiſe; but *for the ſuffering of death*, that thro' that *he might deſtroy him who has the power of death; that is the Devil, and deliver them who thro' fear of death are all their life-time ſubject to bondage.* What an example was here of a good will towards men! Rom. v. 8.

(5.) Our preaching of Chriſt ſignifies the pains we are at in perſuading people to come to him.

We

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2 Cor. v. 20. We *are ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as tho' God did beſeech you by us: we pray you in Chriſt's ſtead be ye reconcil'd unto God.* We muſt follow you with the doctrines of godlineſs, that God was manifeſt in the fleſh: and what is the expoſtulation that ariſes out of it but this? *Why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?* We tell you there is hope in *Iſrael* concerning this thing. You may *flee for a refuge, to lay hold upon the hope ſet before you:* and will you not come to him *that ye may have life?*

Heb. vi. 18.

Indeed we are cloath'd with a great authority, or rather are the heralds of *his.* He has told us what to ſay in a way of demand, and in a way of threatning. We tell you that He whom you ſerve is *over all, God bleſſed for ever:* that he will be a ſwift witneſs againſt his enemies, that whoever believes not is condemn'd already, and *the wrath of God abides on him.* But tho' theſe are terrors of the Lord, we know and uſe 'em to *perſuade men.* We call 'em to flee from a wrath to come; and in doing this, we muſt be ſuppos'd to tell 'em, that a way is found out, *a new and living one*; new in oppoſition to that which the great God had once eſtabliſh'd, and which our firſt parents had broke, and therefore is now ſtopt up; and then it is a living way, as no death can come there, as life flows and ſtreams out from it, as it has a vital influence upon thoſe that enter into it, and as it leads into the life of another world. Thus our preaching is not only a diſplay of doctrine to your underſtanding, but of argument to your affections, that you may receive both the knowledge and *the love of the truth*, and ſo may be ſav'd. This is preaching of Chriſt Jeſus.

2 Cor. v. 10.

Heb. x. 19.

(6.) We aſſert his authority over the whole creation, and eſpecially over the churches: that *he has the government upon his ſhoulders*, that *all power is given to him in heaven and in earth.* This is an article

Iſa. ix. 7. Mat. xxviii. 18.

that

that we must by no means part with. He will never give his glory to another, and it is a breach of trust for us to do it: *We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus sake.* His empire over the world is not so clearly seen as it will be; but that over the churches we must make as visible as we can, by owning no other authority. He speaks to his disciples of *things pertaining to the kingdom of God* in so ample a way, that the dispensation we are under is complete: *You need not that any man teach you, but the same anointing teaches you all things; and this is truth, and no lye.* This is the cause of God, to which his servants have born a testimony; and *they have overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony.* I will only add one note here, that surely asserting the Divinity of Christ ought not to be call'd a denying this authority. 'Tis strange that those people who do not believe his godhead, should set up for the best friends to his empire. My saying that he is equal with the Father, can never be inconsistent with a belief that he is Head over all things to the church.

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2 Cor. iv. 6.

Acts i. 2.

1 Joh. ii. 28.

Rev. xii. 11.

(7.) In this preaching of Christ, we have an eye to that state, where *his* glory shall be seen, and *ours* complete: *Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.* For this end we make him known, that you may *press on to the mark for the prize of the high calling.* We tell you that which the natural man despises, and which the very people of God cannot think of without an awful confusion. We know but in part, and therefore can but *prophesie in part: but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.* When we have our resemblance of his Person, we shall be fitted to all the joys of meditation, being made *like him by seeing him as he is.* The rejoicing that

Col. i. 28.

Phil. iii. 14.

1 Cor. iii. 17.

1 Joh. iii. 2.

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Phil. ii. 16.

May 10, 1719.

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2. THE other part of the truth contain'd in this text, is, that he was *preached unto the* GENTILES; by whom we are to understand all the rest of the world, who had been by the providence of God a long while distinguish'd from one particular people; for when he gave the word to *Jacob*, and his statutes to *Israel*, *he dealt not so with any other nation.* *Moses* appeals to them as possessing the grand peculiar of all history, having that in their experience which was never known any where else. *Ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from one side of the heaven to the other, whether there has been any such thing as this great thing is, or has been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of fire, as thou hast heard and live? Or hath God assay'd to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, and by signs, and by wonders, by wars, by a mighty hand, and an outstretch'd arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? Unto thee it was shew'd.* He turns very often upon this great privilege in that long discourse. *Thou art a holy people to the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God has chosen thee to be a special people to himself, above all people that are on the face of the earth.*

Psal. cxlvii. 19.

Deut. iv. 32,—35.

—vii. 6.

This argument God himſelf uſes by way of reproach to them who had ſo many diſtinctions in their lot, and ſo few in their carriage. *Hear this word that the Lord has ſpoken againſt you, O ye children of Iſrael, againſt the whole family which I brought up out of the land of Egypt; you only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore you will I puniſh for your iniquities.* Nor does the great Apoſtle of the *Gentiles* deny this, tho' his miniſtry was directed at the levelling all thoſe peculiarities, and ſhewing the world that now they were at an end. Yet when he puts the queſtion, *What profit has the Jew, and what advantage is there in circumciſion?* He anſwers, *Much every way, chiefly becauſe to them were committed the oracles of God.* And in the time that his ſoul was in all that agony about them, that he *had great heavineſs, and continual ſorrow in his heart, that he could wiſh himſelf accurs'd from Chriſt, for his brethren, his kinſmen, according to the fleſh*; yet he owns, that to *them pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the ſervice of God, and the promiſes.*

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Amos iii. 1, 2.

Rom. iii. 1, 2.

ix. 2, 3, 4.

Theirs alone was the *adoption*, no other people were accounted children, but rather ſpoke of as *dogs*, according to the phraſe that our Lord us'd, when the woman of *Canaan* came to him. Theirs was the *glory* that fill'd the tabernacle and the temple, and appear'd in the holieſt of all. Theſe were things not ſo much as talk'd of in any other place beſides *Judah*, where God was well known, and his name was great in *Iſrael*, in *Salem* was his tabernacle, and *Sion* was his ſeat. Theirs were the *covenants*, God never profeſs'd a relation to any people but them, having taken *Jacob* to himſelf, and *Iſrael* for his peculiar treaſure. They were a people near unto the Lord, and concerning whom, he proclaim'd what he did no where elſe, that he would be to them a God, and they ſhould be to him

Pſal. lxxvi. 1, 2.

SERM. XXVII. him a people. To them pertain'd *the giving of the law:* Never were ſtatutes deliver'd with a purity unallay'd, and with a thunder undiſguis'd, but among them. Other nations were left to *walk after their own ways,* but to them God himſelf came down, Angels attending him, clouds and darkneſs covering the place, voices and flames diffuſing the authority. *He came with ten thouſand of his ſaints: from his right hand went a fiery law for 'em.* Theirs were the *promiſes, the covenants of promiſe* were of the ſame extent with the *commonwealth of Iſrael.* For tho' God did not leave himſelf without witneſs to others, in giving 'em rain and fruitful ſeaſons, filling their hearts with food and gladneſs; yet to theſe he open'd out the great deſign of redeeming the world. This is call'd *the hope of Iſrael;* for tho' it came with a benefit to all mankind, yet the *Jews* alone could be ſaid to hope for it, and none but *the twelve tribes inſtantly ſerving God day and night* had any ground to expect it. And the reaſon is plain from what the Apoſtle advances further, *Theirs were the fathers,* men who in ſeveral ages waited for the conſolation of *Iſrael.* The prophets, in whom the *Spirit of Chriſt* did teſtify, were of their country. All the light that was given to the world concerning a Mediator came from them. And out of them *Chriſt himſelf* aroſe *according to the fleſh.* When he took upon him our nature, he appear'd in their country. He was of the ſeed of *Abraham,* and the family of *David,* and came in perſon to none but *his own.* There he had his houſe, *The Lord came ſuddenly to his temple.* He was the meſſenger of the covenant that God had made with them, and they alone profeſs'd any *delight* in him. He was rais'd up as *a horn of ſalvation in the houſe of his ſervant David.* And though he came as a light to lighten the *Gentiles,* yet he was in a particular manner *the glory of his people Iſrael*

Deut. xxxiii. 2.

Eph. ii. 12.

Mal. iii. 1.

So

So that you see the world was for a long time thus unequally divided into *Jews* and *Gentiles*. By the former, no more was meant than a single nation, confin'd within narrow bounds. These were the favourites of heaven, and the greatest part of our nature was all the rest of the world. Now when Christ was manifest in the flesh, and justified in the Spirit, and seen of Angels, (they saw him up to his throne) he determin'd to widen his empire. He sat down on God's right hand, that from thence he might *send the rod of his strength out of Zion*, and have a *willing people in the day of his power:* He was to *judge among the heathen, and wound the heads over many countries.* He therefore orders those whom he had put into the ministry, to preach him among the *Gentiles*, where he was never heard of, not so much as expected, or at least not with those grounds of hope and clearness of evidence under which he had been reveal'd to the *Jews*.

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Psal. cx. 1, 2, 6.

This is one branch of the mystery of godliness, that they who knew him not before, should have the joyful sound ringing in their ears. I am not yet got so far into my subject, to consider this under the notion that the text gives us of it, as a wonder and a *mystery*. I will therefore only pursue this one observation in two parts; *first*, that till the Gospel came to be preach'd, God was all along narrowing the interest of religion, bringing it into straiter bounds: but *secondly*, from the time of our Lord's ascension, he took quite other methods, enlarging both his interest and the ways of promoting it.

1. You will see by going over some historical accounts, that 'till the Gospel came to be preach'd in this last and best edition, religion confin'd and drew in it self by every new dispensation. As for example,

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(1.) When God had reveal'd that promise, which was the blooming Gospel, that *the seed of the woman should break the serpent's head*, as it was delivered to our first parents, so it equally concern'd all their posterity. But we are soon told, in process of time, that tho' *Cain* had some notions of natural religion, yet he was a stranger to the mystery and benefit of what had been reveal'd. For *by faith Abel offer'd a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtain'd witness, that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts.* After his murder, *Seth* was born, as *another seed, instead of Abel, whom Cain slew*; and when he had a son, who was nam'd *Enos, then began men to call on the name of the Lord.*

Gen. iii. 15.

Heb. xi. 3.

Gen. iv. ult.

There were then two societies. They that served God in a right manner, liv'd separate from the rest. *Cain*'s posterity, though they are remember'd for the invention of several arts, yet succeeded to the lot of their father, from the divine presence they were hid. When this distinction wore out, that *the sons of God* (*Seth*'s race) *went in to the daughters of men*, it first confounded religion, making all wickedness run loose, and then it brought a flood *upon the world of the ungodly.* As they were alike in practice, God makes 'em alike in vengeance. *All flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth, and God said unto Noah, the end of all flesh is come before me.*

vi. 3.

12, 13.

(2.) After the flood, when our whole nature consisted of no more than what came out of the Ark, *Noah* had three sons, *Shem*, *Ham* and *Japhet*, and it's only the first of these among whom the true worship was maintain'd. For tho' God would *persuade Japhet, and* make him *dwell in the tents of Shem*, yet many ages roll'd off before that design took place. And as for *Ham*, he and his posterity were under a curse, and doom'd to be *servants of servants to their brethren*; so that here seem'd to be another

another ſtraitning in religion. In *Adam*'s family God had one in two, in *Noah*'s he had no more than one in three; and thus it held for a great many generations, till the fulneſs of time came to *bring his ſons from far, and his daughters from the ends of the earth.* SERM. XXVII.

(3.) Even *Shem*'s family grewdegenerate and polluted; for tho' they did not run into the wickedneſs of the *Canaanites*, which made *Abraham* ſend among them for a wife to his ſon, yet they were guilty of idolatry, as you may learn from what *Joſhua* tells the *Jews, Your fathers dwelt on the other ſide of the flood in old time, even Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor, and ſerved other gods.* And afterwards when he puts them to their choice, he mentions *the gods which their fathers ſerv'd on the other ſide of the flood.* Joſh. xxiv. 2.

Here then religion lodges it ſelf in a ſingle family, as the Martyr *Stephen* obſerves, *The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham in Meſopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran.* He is ſeparated from all the reſt of the earth. We read in his firſt remove, that his father *Terah*, and his Nephew *Lot* came with him, under ſome convictions of their former error. *Nachor* they leave behind'em, from whence the family was ſupplied with wives in two generations after. *Terah* dies in *Haran*, *Abraham* therefore and *Lot* were left alone in the poſſeſſion of the true religion. *When his father was dead, he removed him into this land wherein you now dwell.* *Lot*, upon a quarrel, ſeparates from *Abraham*, and goes to *Sodom*; and tho' he was *a righteous man*, yet we read of no good among his poſterity. But the promiſe is given to *Abraham after Lot was parted from him*; and all the land he ſaw eaſtward and weſtward and northward and ſouthward was enſur'd to him and his ſeed, as diſtinguiſh'd from thoſe of his relations. The children of *Lot* are Acts vii. 2. Acts vii. 4.

SERM. XXVII. number'd among the heathen. *The Ammonite and Moabite were not to enter into the congregation of the Lord, till their tenth generation*; so that there was ground enough for that advice, *Look unto the hole whence you are hewen, and the rock out of which ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you, for I called him* ALONE, *and blessed him, and increas'd him.*

Deut. xxiii. 3. Isa. li. 1, 2.

(4.) Here is still a farther narrowing of the divine interest; for tho' *Abraham*'s whole family were taken into an external covenant, during his own days, yet one half of them are cut off afterwards. *Ishmael* was a child of many prayers, *O that he may live in thy sight*, and was blessed, *because he was Abraham's seed*, yet the covenant is made only with *Isaac*; and therefore we find his posterity number'd among the crowd of enemies against whom the Church of God were defending themselves by prayer. *Gebal and Ammon, and Amalek, the Philistines with them of Tyre, the Tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites, of Moab, and the Hagarenes: Assur also is join'd with them, and they have helped the children of Lot.* Many of these people descended from those parents, who once professed the true religion. But this partition in *Abraham*'s family was so remarkable, that the Apostle makes it an allusion to the greatest distinction that is in the world, *viz.* between hypocrites and true believers. *Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond-woman, and the other by a free-woman; he that was of the bond-woman, was born after the flesh, but he of the free-woman was by promise; which things are an allegory; for these are the two covenants, one from mount Sinai, which genders to bondage; and we brethren, as Isaac was, are children of the promise.*

Ps. lxxxiii. 6, 7, 8.

Gal. iv. 22, 23, 24.

(5.) Here's a farther limitation; for tho' *Isaac* had the promise renew'd to him, *That in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed*, yet that's only

to

to be underſtood of one half. He had two ſons, *Eſau* and *Jacob*, and *whilſt the children were not yet born, neither had done either good or evil, that the promiſe of God, according to election, might ſtand, not of works, but of him that calls, it was ſaid, The elder ſhall ſerve the younger.* Tho' both of them had a religious education, yet the benefits of it are very much confin'd to one of the branches. Indeed it's probable, that ſome of *Eſau*'s poſterity kept up the worſhip of the true God, and that *Job* and his friends might be of that deſcent. But this wore out after a few generations, and there was room enough for God to ſay, *Jacob have I loved, and Eſau have I hated.* They run down into groſs idolatry; they were call'd *the border of wickedneſs, and the people againſt whom the Lord had indignation for ever.*

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Rom ix. 11, 12.

Mal. i. 4.

(6.) *Jacob*'s whole family indeed remain poſſeſs'd of the true religion, and all the twelve tribes are brought out of *Egypt*: but in *Jeroboam*'s time ten of 'em fall off both from their King and their God: They wander into all the abominations of the heathen, ſo that there are but two tribes in which the Lord God of *Iſrael* is own'd, according to his inſtitutions. *He rent Iſrael from the houſe of David, and they made Jeroboam, the ſon of Nebat, king, and Jeroboam drave Iſrael from following the Lord, and made them ſin a great ſin. Ephraim compaſſed God about with lies, and the houſe of Iſrael with deceit; but Judah was faithful to the Lord, and ruled among the Saints. Thy calf, O Samaria, has caſt thee off, mine anger is kindled againſt them, how long will it be ere they attain to innocency?* And this diſtinction held in ſome meaſure even after the captivity: For,

2 Kin. xvii. 21.

Hoſ. xi. 12.

viii. 5.

(7.) Whether the ten tribes return'd with the two or not, as to me it ſeems probable they did, yet you find in a little time they revive the old prejudice. The *Samaritans* were ſuppos'd by the

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Jews not to be of the ſtock of *Iſrael*, but it's plain they always claim'd it. Thus the woman of *Samaria* talks to our Lord, *Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well, and drank thereof, he and his cattel?* And ſhe ſpeaks as a ſharer in the great hope of *Iſrael*, *We know that the Meſſiah comes, and when he is come, he will teach us all things.* But yet, whatever honour they might have from their genealogy, it's plain they were of a different caſt from the *Jews* in their religion: This appears by the woman's confeſſion, *Our fathers worſhipped in this mountain, and ye ſay Jeruſalem is the place where men ought to worſhip.* And the quarrel between them had run ſo high, that *the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans.* But the ſmallneſs of the channel is what our Lord himſelf makes evident, when he tells the woman, who talk'd of their father *Jacob*, and the expected Meſſiah, *Ye worſhip ye know not what, we know what we worſhip, for ſalvation is of the Jews.*

Joh. iv, 12.

ver. 25.

(8.) There ſeems to be a yet narrower diſtinction: For the people who liv'd at ſome diſtance from the temple, though there was no diſpute of their lineal deſcent, are accounted afar off. Thus it is ſaid of the inhabitants in *Galilee*, where our Lord went about in his miniſtry, that *they ſat in darkneſs, and in the region of the ſhadow of death.* They call'd it *Galilee of the Gentiles;* perhaps not only to ſignify that it was populous, but to tell us that they were almoſt ſunk down into the diſtreſs of the heathen. This was a country ſo remote from all religious fame, that as no good thing was ever expected out of *Nazareth*, ſo they bid *Nicodemus ſearch and look, for no prophet ariſes out of Galilee.* So that you ſee, at the time of our Lord's coming into the world, there was little of the true worſhip, except in *Jeruſalem*, and a very ſmall circuit of land round about it.

Joh. vii. ult.

Thus

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Thus the promise that was first given to *Adam* at large, as design'd for his whole posterity, is regarded among his sons, only by one of the two; among *Noah*'s by one of the three; among *Shem*'s by a single family; among *Abraham*'s *Ishmael* is broke off, and *Isaac* chosen; of the sons of *Isaac* the first-born *Esau* is rejected; of *Jacob*'s twelve only two remain'd in the right profession. And tho' these may be suppos'd to spread abroad into the country, yet the worship of the true God lay in a little compass among them. Thus was the empire of Christ narrowing it self for many ages, as if he had lov'd, not a diffusion, but a confinement. Divine providence seem'd to take delight in striking off people; and every new dispensation, though it made the covenant brighter, yet it made the application of it straiter; and when it lay in the least compass, then was *the fulness of time that God sent forth his son, made of a woman, and made under the law.* But, Gal. iv. 4.

2. From that period the divine mercy entered into other measures. You may then see how religion widen'd in pursuance of antient prophecies.

(1.) Our Saviour was *a minister of the circumcision,* and only *sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,* but yet even then he gave a dawn of his being *preach'd among the Gentiles.* His chief conversation at first was in *Galilee*, and the places beyond *Jordan*; upon them as the prophet foretold, *a great light* was made to shine. *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*, cities remote from *Jerusalem*, had *mighty works done in them*; and *Capernaum*, which had never been heard of for religion, was *exalted to heaven:* Nay, at *Nazareth* he *taught in their synagogues, being glorify'd of all.* Rom. xv. 8. Luk. iv. 15.

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Still farther you find, that tho' he once order'd his seventy disciples *not to enter into any village or city of the Samaritans*, yet it's observ'd of himself, that *he must needs go thro' Samaria*; not meerly for the conversion of a poor woman, who publish'd her faith as soon as ever she had it, *Is not this the Christ?* But many others in that city believ'd on him upon a greater ground than her testimony; who said, *He has told me all that ever I did; they heard him themselves, and knew that this was indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.* In his conversation he shew'd no abhorrence of that poor despicable people. He let it be known, that mercy had found a way to them. Thus the man, who was robb'd and wounded in going down to *Jericho*, and had been neglected by a Priest and a Levite, is reliev'd by a *Samaritan*; and of the ten lepers that were cleans'd, there was *but one who return'd, and with a loud voice glorified God, and he was a Samaritan.*

Joh. iv. 4.

ver. 42.

Nay, he went farther, and gave some dawn to the conversion of the *Gentiles.* He saith concerning the piety of the Ruler, *I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel*; and upon that observes that *many shall come from the east, and the west, and the north, and the south, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, when the children of the kingdom are cast out.* The poor *Syrophenician* woman that follow'd him with her importunity, and whom at first he would not answer, and afterwards she is call'd no better than a *dog*, has this noble character given of her at last, *O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt.*

Matt. viii. 10, 11.

But we have still a more copious instance: *There were certain Greeks that came to worship at the feast, these come to Philip, and desire to see Jesus.* Upon that our Lord makes this remark, *The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified; verily I say unto you,*

Joh. xii. 20.

ver. 23, 24.

you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone; but if it die, it brings forth much fruit. He farther tells 'em, that this enquiry of the *Greeks* was the preſage of an opening glory; not that it would appear very much till after his death; for he compares himſelf and his intereſt to a grain of wheat, which is multiplied by its ſeeming to be loſt. The ground that buries it revives and encreaſes it: And thus, though he ſhould for ſome time *abide alone*, yet after his ſufferings it would be ſeen, that dying was only the ſpreading out of an enlarged life.

(2.) Accordingly at his death, he took away all that which had kept up the diſtinction between *Jew* and *Gentile*, and ſo laid the foundation for their having the Goſpel. It was impoſſible that ſuch a religion as the *Jews* had ſhould be ſpread with any great ſucceſs among the *Gentiles*. Much of it was *local*; they muſt go to appear before the Lord *three times in the year*. There was but one *Temple* for all the world, but one High-prieſt, and but one place which the Lord had choſen to put his name there. Now, if the duty of people conſiſted in going thither, it muſt be a great toil and expence to the nations afar off, and therefore he *aboliſh'd in his fleſh the enmity, even the law of commandments contain'd in ordinances, for to make in himſelf of twain one new man, ſo making peace to reconcile both unto God in one body by the croſs, having ſlain the enmity thereby.* The typical meaning of all their ſervices being anſwer'd, there's now an end of them. *Neither at Jeruſalem, nor any other mountain, do we worſhip the Father*; for if we do it in *ſpirit and in truth*, 'tis enough; *the Father ſeeks ſuch to worſhip him. I will that men do every where lift up holy hands without wrath or doubting.* We may perceive *God is no reſpecter of perſons.*

Eph. ii. 15, 16.

Joh. iv. 23.

1 Tim. ii. 2.

Acts x 34.

3. He

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(3.) He gave orders to his disciples soon after the resurrection, that they might be witnesses for him in *Jerusalem*, *Judea*, *Samaria*, and *to the uttermost ends of the earth*. Go, saith he, and *disciple all nations*, *preach the Gospel to every creature*. Indeed he charges 'em to *begin at Jerusalem*, that they might have the first offer, and his resurrection appear in full evidence; but after that, *all flesh was to see the salvation of our God. He would make bare his holy arm in the eyes of all nations*. These instructions were altogether new; for tho' God rais'd up prophets in several ages, yet he did not use to send them abroad: But now, by virtue of that power that our Lord had in heaven and in earth, he will be *sought of them that asked not after him, and found of them that sought him not*; and therefore speaks by his Apostles, *Behold me, behold me, to a people that were not called by his name*. Thus the Lord created a *new thing in the earth*, that which their fathers had not heard of, they are to be unconfin'd in their ministry.

Mar. xvi. 16.

Isa. lii. 9, 10.

Ixv. 1.

(4.) For this he gives 'em qualifications. They are *endued with power from on high*, the holy Ghost came upon them. That power signifies two things; *first*, their authority to go abroad; 'till then they were not to do it; he bids 'em *tarry at Jerusalem* till this commission was sent down. *Secondly*, it also imports their *capacity* to go upon this great expedition. For as the Holy Ghost came upon them in the shape of *cloven and flaming tongues*, so that is an emblem, both that they should be able to speak all languages, and that the word of the Lord in their mouths would shine, and search, and pierce, like a fire. As he sent them upon work that never any were employ'd about before, so he furnish'd them for it in a new way. The Church of the *Jews* seldom wanted miracles among them, but they had never any

any thing like this; that a company of *Galileans* should be attended by vaſt numbers of *devout people* who were *aſſembled from every nation under heaven, and theſe all hear in their different tongues the wonderful works of God.* It is reckon'd a mighty thing, that when *Moſes* was of a ſlow ſpeech, God ſhould *be with his mouth*; but what was that to this unravelling of *Babel*? At the building of that Tower, *God confounded their languages*; at the building of a Goſpel-church, he over-rul'd that confuſion, and gave in a miraculous remedy. SERM. XXVII. Act. ii. 9, 10, 11.

(5.) He did it in accompliſhment of his ancient prophecies. The book of God is full to this purpoſe. Promiſes are made to thoſe people who ſeem'd the fartheſt off from mercy. I have ſhewn you with what contempt *Iſhmael* was caſt out: we read that his ſons were *Nebaioth*, *Kedar*, and ſeveral others; his poſterity were ſome of the greateſt enemies to the Church of God. The *Iſhmaelites* and *Hagarenes* are in the black-roll of ſinners. The Pſalmiſt complains that he ſojourn'd in the tents of *Kedar*, and yet there is mercy for them. *All the flocks of Kedar ſhall be gathered unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth ſhall miniſter to thee; they ſhall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the houſe of my glory.* Iſai. lx. 7.

The greateſt oppreſſions that ever the *Jews* felt, were in *Egypt* and *Aſſyria*, and yet even theſe were to have the offers of ſalvation; *In that day Iſrael ſhall be a third with Egypt, and with Aſſyria, even a bleſſing in the midſt of the land: Whom the Lord of hoſts ſhall bleſs, ſaying, Bleſſed be Egypt my people, and Aſſyria the work of mine hands, and Iſrael mine inheritance.* Iſai. xix. 24, 25.

If there could be any hope for thoſe that liv'd on the great continent, yet methinks the iſlands were deliver'd to deſpair and darkneſs. As the ſea ſeem'd to have waſh'd 'em off from the reſt of the

SER M. XXVIII. xlix. 1.

world, so they might say, as in another case, *The Lord has utterly separated us from his people.* But even these are within the promise, *Listen O isles unto me, and hearken ye people from far.* And when the question is put, *Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows?* The answer is, *Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring my sons from far to the name of the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel.* Thus open is the promise, *I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see my glory; and I will set a sign among 'em, and will send those that es-*
lxvi. 18, 19. *cape to the Isles afar off, that have not heard of my fame, neither seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.*

May 24. 1719.

SERMON XXVIII.

YOU have heard that our blessed Lord, as a reward to his sufferings, had his name spread farther than ever the Father's had been; for he was *preach'd*
Psalm ii. 8. *among the Gentiles: he has the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.* And if you do but consider that this was a glory which the Supreme Being did not think fit to take for several generations, I cannot suppose it will be any astonishment to tell you, that

II. He who thus distinguish'd himself by an honour that had not been known for many ages, could be

be no other than the Moſt High God. *Jehovah* SERM. XXVIII.
is to be King over all the earth; and in that day there ſhall be one Lord, and his name one. 'Twould be Zech. xiv. 9.
ſtrange that a creature ſhould have that for his reward, which the great God himſelf has not. That the one ſhould be only known in *Iſrael,* and the other (as if thoſe limits were unworthy of him) ſhould be *glorious to the ends of the earth.* That the revelation which the Father made of himſelf reach'd no farther than the *Jews* for a vaſt length of time, will not be denied: *He ſuffer'd all nations to walk in their own ways; the times of that ignorance he wink'd at:* and therefore, who is it of whom we read ſuch things, that *the iſles ſhall wait for him? that his name ſhall be great from the riſing of the ſun, to the going down of the ſame?* that *he ſhall bring forth judgment unto victory, and on his arm ſhall the Gentiles truſt?* Who is it that ſpreads out a greater glory than ever the God of *Iſrael* did? Is this a creature?

Act. xiv. 16. xvii. 30. Mal. i. 11. Matt. xii. 20, 21.

Sometimes he ſpeaks in his deriv'd character: *The Lord has call'd me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother has he made mention of my name, ſaying, Thou art my ſervant, O Iſrael, in whom I will be glorified. The Lord that form'd me from the womb to be his ſervant ſaid,—— that I ſhould be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God ſhall be my ſtrength, he ſaid,—— I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou may'ſt be my ſalvation to the ends of the earth.* The *Jewiſh* religion paid a mighty tribute to none but the Supreme God, and ſhall the Chriſtian give more to a ſubordinate Deity? no, we adore what they did. *Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not alſo of the Gentiles? It is one God, who ſhall juſtifie the circumciſion by faith, and the uncircumciſion thro' faith.*

Iſa. xlix. 1, 3, 5, 6. Rom. iii. 29, 30.

I have ſhewn you that his being *ſeen of Angels* in the manner you have heard, was too much for

one

SERM. XXVIII. one who is only some degrees above 'em; that their worship and adoration was so much allegiance to an uncreated nature. And I hope you will now see, that his being *preach'd to the Gentiles* would be an excess that no true devotion can allow, if he was not the Most High, and *thought it no robbery to be equal with God.* I'm sure it must be a *robbery* in thus making himself equal with him in honour if he was not equal to him in nature.

In the pursuit of this argument, I shall remind you of those heads that I have already enlarg'd upon. In opening out the design and fulness of these expressions, I told you, that for Christ to be the subject of our ministry, was that we should declare him to be, 1. The only Mediator between God and man. 2. Sufficient to answer all the dangers of our souls. 3. We are to do this in the most open way. 4. That he was entirely willing to save those that are lost. 5. We therefore persuade sinners to come to him, and, 6. Are bound to assert his right of government over the whole creation, and especially over the Church. You have heard enough to convince you it is that. Thus Christ must be preach'd. In this light he is held forth by the Scriptures of truth; and what we tell the world of Him is upon these characters. I will now shew you, that all these can be true of no other than a GOD, and our ministry would be a fraud to mankind, we should be found *false witnesses* both to you and to Him that sent us, if we said all this of a creature.

This I desire your attention to, as that which is not only a reveal'd doctrine, but what enters into all your hope and duty. Many have a mind to pass it off as a dry speculation, whether Christ is God or no. "They don't love *doubtful disputations*; these are things above 'em; they are "hard to be conceiv'd; 'tis carrying 'em out of "their

" their depth. Either it is not laid down in the SERM.
" Scriptures, or if it be, 'tis under so many folds XXVIII.
" of mystery, that God does not expect we
" should believe what he knows we cannot under-
" stand. That a man may be sav'd without it,
" 'tis not necessary to our holiness now, or the
" great felicity of another world." Thus do people *sham* the truth, who have not the confidence to *deny* it. It lets us see, that Satan has advocates of all sizes: that if he cannot bring you to make shipwreck of faith, he'll bring you to make a jest of it. But *wilt thou know, O vain man,* that without faith in Christ, as the only Mediator, a sufficient Saviour, a merciful and faithful High-priest, a King over the world, and especially the Church, thou art amongst his enemies? Now, there's no abstracting these from his Divinity; they belong to him as a God. The Scripture makes him the object of our confidence upon these heads, only because *he is the Lord, and there is none else.*

1. We can preach no Person to the Gentiles, as the only Mediator between God and man, but one that is God as well as man: *The same that was in* Joh. i. 2. *the beginning with God: he is the true God, and eter-* 1 Joh. v. 20. *nal life.* Do any suppose that because he is call'd *the man Christ Jesus,* that therefore he was not *God manifest in the flesh*? Are we afraid of meeting him in this lower title? no, *He is antichrist, who denies* iv. 2, 3. *that Christ is come in the flesh.* But consider here, why must he as Mediator be a man? What necessity was there of his coming down into our very nature? The reason is plain, that he might stand upon a level with one of the parties, whose happiness he comprehended in the reconciliation. As the Apostle argues, *A Mediator is not a Mediator of* Gal. iii. 20. *one.* It's suppos'd that there are two in the quarrel; therefore in making up the breach, he must be as low as the offender: *Forasmuch as the children* Heb. ii. 14.

were

SERM. XXVIII. *were partakers of flesh and blood, he likewise himself took part of the same.*

And is not the obligation as great and strong that he should be a God? If there was any necessity of his partaking of one nature, there must be the very same of his sustaining the other. What's the reason that an Angel could not do as well? He is plac'd between the two natures, neither God nor man: and therefore if a *partnership in both* was not needful, such a creature must have had the most happy situation for this great design. But Angels are both too high and too low: their nature was above the seed of *Abraham*, and therefore he that came to redeem us, was *made lower than they*. Why? that he might be as low as man; but that would never constitute him a Mediator, unless at the same time he was as high as God. He was *in the form of God*, and thought it no robbery to be *equal with God*, when he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him *the form of a servant*. To say that he represented the Divine Nature is nothing; for an Angel, nay a man, might do that. *Moses* did it, and therefore it is said with respect to him,

Gal. iii. 19. that *the law was ordain'd by Angels in the hands of a Mediator*. He might in the same manner have represented both God and man, by keeping his first glory: for if he is ever so much better than the Angels, he is nearer to man than God, supposing him to be no more than a creature. But in taking

iv. 4. upon him our interest, he was to be *made of a woman, it behov'd him in all things to be like his brethren.*

Heb. ii. 16. And what? Is the concern of *our nature* manag'd by an equal, and that of the *Divine* only by a de-

Isa. ix. 6. puty? No, the *child born* is the *mighty God*, the *Son given* is the *everlasting Father*. *Job* gives you the true notion of a Mediator, when he complains that all the creation was not able to furnish one.

Speaking

ſhall ſwear. Surely ſhall one ſay, In the LORD *have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength; even to* HIM *ſhall men come, and all that are incens'd againſt him ſhall be aſham'd: in the Lord ſhall all the ſeed of Iſrael be juſtified and glory.*

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We durſt not ſay of a creature, let him be never ſo glorious, that *by one offering he has for ever perfected them that are ſanctified.* Obſerve there, what He gives 'em is a *perfection.* This perfection is *for ever*; it includes their *ſanctification*, and 'tis by no more than *one offering.* The Devils are a great ſacrifice to Divine Juſtice; but tho' that execution has continu'd ſo long, they are not ſo much as *ſanctified.* The *Jews* had an High-prieſt by divine appointment, who ſanctified the people, but they were never *perfected*; what he did to 'em muſt be repeated every year: But here is one offering that held for the ſpace of three hours; and this avails to the full pardon of all the Saints that ever were, or ever will be either in earth or in heaven. Heb. x. 14.

'Tis plain the merit does not ariſe from either the extremity or the length of his troubles. Another perſon's body might have been expos'd to the ſame torture, and yet it would not avail as a propitiation for one ſin. So that the value of this death is taken from his dignity that endur'd it: and in that caſe we muſt conſider him as having more than a dying nature. If he was no higher than an Angel, he muſt be too high for a croſs. He died as a man, and what muſt He be more than man, to give that death ſuch an extenſion of merit, as to make an atonement for thoſe vaſt numbers out of *every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation?*

Had he been a creature, tho' never ſo highly exalted, his death might be look'd on as heroical; but not as atoning, becauſe it was impoſſible that ſuch a one ſhould lay the Divine Nature under any obligation: *For who has firſt given to him, and it* Rom. xi. 35.

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it shall be recompensed to him again? As for example, an Angel may be very dutiful, but he is uncapable of having a claim upon God; and the reason is plain, because he can do no more than he is oblig'd to do. And if you will suppose a creature higher than the Angels, the more glory you imagine to be in Him, the less is he capable of deserving for another; because all his capacities are preingag'd.

But now, in order to our Lord's being a sacrifice, that is said of him which could never be true of a creature, that he was *made under the law*. The whole creation are under one law already; nor can they merit any thing from God by laying themselves under a new one. 'Tis too late to have it said of the Angels; for he made them spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire: and therefore, when this is affirm'd of Christ, it must be understood of something *new*, what nothing but his own consent could bring upon him. And it is of the same nature with what he says, *A body hast thou prepared me*, such a cloathing as I had not before: so that this could be only true of one who was eternally *above law*; and that's more than can be said of any creature, let him be never so glorious.

Gal. iv. 4.

Heb. x. 5.

I'm aware of an answer that some will give to this, that he was made under the ceremonial law, that *being a minister of the circumcision, it became him to fulfil all righteousness*. This indeed is true enough; but I think it very plain, the law the Apostle saith he was made under, is not *That*, because he goes on to tell us the reason of it, it was *to redeem those that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons*. Observe here, he speaks this to the *Galatians*, Gentiles who were never under the ceremonial law of the *Jews*, and therefore needed no redemption from it. He came under the same law with them; and that was the law that the whole creation

Speaking of God he saith, *He is not a man as I am,* and therefore, if there's any agreement, it must be by one who is upon a level with each party: *Neither is there any daysman between us, who may lay his hand upon us both.* This daysman, this umpire in the grand debate, is suppos'd not only to come with designs of peace, but as one who is fitted to the two contenders: he must lay his hand upon us both. Now, as it's easie to imagine what he means by laying his hand upon man, how daring must the presumption be that any creature should in the same sense lay his hand upon God? *Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor, has taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him? To whom will ye liken me, or shall I be equal, saith the holy One?*

SERM. XXVIII. Job ix. 32. Isa. xl. 13, 14. ver. 25.

There are two sorts of Mediators: *First,* one that has no interest in *either* party; what we call an indifferent person. *Secondly,* one that has an interest in *both.* Our blessed Saviour was not a Mediator of the former sort, but only of the latter. Nay indeed, there could be no Mediator that was unbyas's'd to both parties. Angels must have join'd with God against man, devils would have taken part with man against God; and therefore our Mediator must be so plac'd between the two adversaries, as to partake of the concerns of both. In order to make him properly a party with us, he must be truly *man;* flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone. And does not the very notion of a Mediator tell us, that he could never manage the interest of the Divine Nature, if he was not as truly *God?*

So that his Deity is not an uncertain or a distant speculation; you see it enters into your hope. If he was no man, and if he is no God, we have had no Mediator, the war keeps open; and if there's no reconciliation, there's no pardon: *Our preaching*

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is in vain, and your faith in vain, you are yet in your sins. If he was not God, his pretending to secure the divine glory by a satisfaction was exercising himself in things too high for him. He might have a pity for *man*, but no creature was great enough to take into his hands the interest of *God*, who has expressly told us, that he *puts no trust in his Saints.* Not that they ever deceiv'd him; but the meaning is, that there is one affair which he will keep within himself, which none of the spirits about the throne can be equal to. And what can this design be, that none of the Saints are let into, as managers or agents, but the redemption of his people?

Job v. 18.

(2.) In preaching Christ Jesus, we represent him to the world as sufficient to answer all the necessities of their souls, both by way of atonement for 'em, and of conquest over 'em; that he paid a full price, and that he is possest of a complete fund. We do not call 'em to the vain practice of the heathen religion, to *trust in a God that cannot save:* If there was any more needful to their pardon than he has done, or to their healing than he can do, *in vain would salvation be hop'd for* from Him, any more than from the multitude of mountains. But we tell the Gentiles, that he is *one that is mighty, able to save to the uttermost,* that *whoever believes in him shall not be confounded*; that *the ends of the earth may look to him and be sav'd.*

Ps. lxxxix. 19. Heb. vii. 24. 1 Pet. ii. 6.

Now, upon what foundation can we talk so at large, but because *he is the Lord, and there is none else*? He speaks of himself, *I am Jehovah; there is no God besides me; a just God and a Saviour, and there is none besides me. Look unto me, and be ye sav'd all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto* ME *every knee shall bow, every tongue shall*

Isa. xlv. 21,—25.

us. Are you to be *ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus*, and is he no more than a creature as yourſelves are? I am oblig'd to the Saints, the excellent of the earth, as *the helpers of my joy*, and more ſo to the Angels, as the guardians of my ſoul; but there is ſomething that I want, which neither the one nor the other can give me, and for this I am directed to a Redeemer. Now, his being ſtronger, and more glorious than they, is not enough, unleſs he is omnipotent. I can never think he will be able to *change my vile body, and faſhion it like unto his glorious body*, if it is not from *a power by which he can ſubdue* ALL THINGS *to himſelf.* SERM. XXVIII. Phil. iii. 21.

(3.) I told you that in preaching Chriſt Jeſus, we are to make a public diſcovery of him. We muſt not *conceal his righteouſneſs and his truth from the great congregation*; and in that are to run all hazards: but this is more than we owe to a creature. 'Tis as much, I'm ſure, as we can poſſibly do for a God; and it's pity that there are no bounds ſet to our zeal for him, if he is not ſo. Worſhiping an Angel is reckon'd idolatry, and a groſs wickedneſs, and *let no man beguile you* into it. Suppoſe you had ſeen any of thoſe who *counted all but loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus their Lord*, and ask'd 'em, "Why do you take all this "pains for one who is no more than a vicegerent? "Have you any reſerves for the principal? Can "you poſſibly go farther for the great God, than you do for this glorious Deputy?" They might anſwer, *'Tis he that ſhall judge among many people, and ſtrong nations afar off; and therefore as all people will walk every one in the name of his God, ſo we will walk in the name of this Lord our God for ever and ever.* Col. ii. 18. Phil. iii. 8. Mic. iv. 3. 5.

This had been a ſtrange way of preaching both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*. As to the *Jews*, if they had not taken the Meſſiah to be a God, what had they

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got by the dispensation? What was there in God's speaking to 'em *by his Son*, more than those divers manners that at sundry times he had taken with their fathers *by the prophets?* 'Tis true, we read that Acts xv. 21. *Moses had them that preach'd him in the synagogues every sabbath day*; but preaching *Moses* was quite a different thing to them from preaching *Jesus*. There was no pretence of engaging their trust and dependence upon *Moses:* he was never call'd their Saviour or their Advocate. And so, those expressions 1 Cor. x. 1, 2. of their being *baptiz'd unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea*, never did, and never can mean, that they were call'd by his name, or own'd a divine authority in him. But thus did *John the Baptist* proclaim himself to 'em: *He was the voice of one crying in the wilderness*. When he call'd himself so, it was to the *Jews*, who would easily turn to that Scripture where this was foretold. There they Isa. xl. 9. might read in the plainest language: *O Sion, that bringest good tydings, get thee up into the high mountain, O Jerusalem that bringest good tydings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid.* This does by an undeniable connexion of the passages refer to the coming of Christ Jesus: And what are they to say in this public manner? *Say to the cities of Judah, Behold your* GOD. Supposing they were to make all this solemnity for a creature, what could they possibly do more for the Most High? *Solomon* knew that *God* himself *fill'd the house with his glory*. It was no Angel that manag'd *the cloud*, tho' such a one might have done it. They ador'd the discovery that God made of himself. And what? was a God in a cloud the Supreme God, and a God manifest in the flesh only a subordinate? No, He that Hag. ii. 9. *gave peace in that place*, and made *the glory of the latter house greater than the former, is the Lord of hosts.*

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creation is under, the covenant of works. Now this, as a creature, he must have been under *before*, and therefore his taking upon him that obligation *then* would have been of no avail. SERM. XXVIII.

No wonder therefore that he is call'd *Jehovah our righteousness*; for tho' the dying by which he brought it in shew'd him to be a man, yet the very bringing in that righteousness proves that he is the great *Jehovah*. Nor need we be amaz'd, when *God awakes his sword against a man*, that he considers that man as *his fellow*. This is more than ever he call'd an Angel; for *who among the gods may be compar'd unto the Lord?* and yet he saith it to a man, and that in a case when he was going to shew his human nature in the most lamentable way. The very awaking of the sword against him was an argument that he had something about him weak and vain and passive. He could not upon this consideration be a *fellow* to God; for with regard to *That* he calls himself *a worm, and no man*. And is it not strange that in the very worst of our nature, he should be represented as equal to God? But, it shews us, that tho' the sword kill'd him as a creature, yet the Father had taken his aim in vain, the blow had pass'd for nothing, if it had not fallen upon *his fellow*. Jer. xxiii. 6. Zech. xiii. 9. Ps. lxxxix. 6.

Such a phrase is that which I have some time ago brought in to the service of this argument, *Take heed to the church of* GOD, *which he has purchas'd with his own blood*. To talk of the blood of a God, of a dying bleeding Deity, is a force upon all language; but the meaning can be only this, that tho' he who died was plainly a man, yet there must be another consideration of him: He bled as a man, but he purchas'd as a God: *Being the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his Person, by himself he purg'd our sins. He that lov'd us, and wash'd us from our sins in his own blood, and has* Acts xx. 28. Heb. i. 3. Rev. i. 5, 6, 8.

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made us kings and priests unto God and his Father: He is alpha and omega, the beginning and the ending, the Almighty.

The same may we observe of his other work as a Saviour, and that is making you a willing people; having grace enough to produce your change, to carry on the reformation, and bring you at last to heaven. This the Scripture does sometimes affirm of the Father. Faith is the operation of God, who rais'd Christ from the dead. He is the author of every good and perfect gift, who is *the Father of lights, without any variableness or shadow of turning*. Sometimes the Son claims it as his own performance: *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, and they shall worship thee in the beauties of holiness.* And sometimes we are said to be *born of the Spirit.* Our conversion is *by the power of the holy Ghost*; it is He that quickens.

Psal. cx. 3.

And tho' the scheme that is so much admir'd has given us a subordination of these three, yet we find the greatest work, that our thoughts are able to conceive of, ascrib'd to 'em all. Now, who is it that can *create in you a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within you?* We know that none of the gods of the heathen can give rain, nor can the heavens themselves, without a Divine appointment, give showers, tho' they are so full of 'em. Now, must he be a God who waters the earth? and may a creature cause *his doctrine to drop as the rain, and his speech to distil as the dew?*

Ps. li. 10.

Have you no other than the Supreme Being for your author? Is it He that has made you, and not you yourselves? Is he the potter, and you the clay? And can the *other creation*, which is more difficult by the opposition that it meets with, and more glorious by the happiness that it rises to, may this be done by one who is not God? no, there must be the *exceeding greatness of his power to work faith in us.*

Eph. i. 19.

him a God, becauſe he never call'd himſelf ſo; but with us there are many paſſages that muſt be a ſnare to our ſouls, if they do not reveal Chriſt to be the great object of our faith. SERM. XXVIII.

(4.) In preaching Chriſt Jeſus, we declare his willingneſs to ſave them that are loſt. 'Tis true, this may be in a creature. Angels have a pity to our nature as it is forlorn, and a delight in it when it is renew'd. The Saints put on, as the elect of God, *bowels of mercy*; but yet the concern that a Mediator has for the ſouls of men, is laid down in thoſe characters that belong chiefly to God.

When *Job* ſpeaks of the divine compaſſion, he repreſents it as flowing from a Creator, *Thou ſhalt call, and I will anſwer, for thou wilt have a deſire to the work of thine hands.* He looks upon theſe unhappy people as things or perſons whom he has formed; and in that view the Scripture all along delivers it to us. With the ſame propriety does our Lord ſpeak of his elect. When he was in the world, it is ſaid, *The world was made by him.* He came to redeem a part of his own creation. For though we have *redemption thro' his blood, the forgiveneſs of our ſins*, yet all things are *created by him, and for him.* Thus he ſaith of his people, when he compares himſelf to a ſhepherd, *They are my ſheep*, and deſcribes a hireling, as one *whoſe own the ſheep are not.* 'Tis true, he mentions the Father as making the choice, *Thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me*; but even in that prayer, when he appear'd in the form of a ſervant, he ſpeaks of an united and common poſſeſſion, which would have been too much for a creature. *All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorify'd in them.*

Col. i. 14, 16. Joh. x. 27. xvii. 10.

(5.) Our preaching is perſuading ſinners to come to him, that they may have life. *For in him was life, and that life is the light of the world.* But what a baulk is it to our argument, to tell 'em he is not

John. i. 4.

God?

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God? One of the noblest notions we can have of the Deity is, that *with him is the fountain of life:* Ps. xxxvi. 10. *In him we live, and move, and have our being,* was the plainest account that the Apostle could give of Acts xvii. 28. the most High God to the *Athenians:* and would he say that of him that might be as well affirm'd of a creature? Is it not too much for a depen- Joh. xi. 25. dent being to say, *I am the resurrection and the life, and whosoever believes in me, tho' he were dead, yet shall he live?* The meaning was not, that he who should die should rise again and live, but the names he here takes upon him signify an almighty influence.

We should be asham'd to call people to depend Psal. xxii. upon one that is not God, *All the ends of the earth* 27, 28. *shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee, for the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the Governor among* 2 Cor. iv. *the nations. We preach not our selves, but Christ Je-* 5. *sus the Lord, and our selves your servants for Jesus sake,* for the sake of his honour and empire. Whither should a people seek but to their God, and is our ministry inviting you to any less? No, as Joh. xx. *Thomas* call'd him, *My Lord, and my God,* so all the 28, 31. Scripture is written, *that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life thro' his name.*

(6.) We proclaim him as the great Head over all things unto his Church. We own no other authority; but this is so far from being inconsistent with the belief of his divinity, that we durst not say so much of him if he was not God, and had Eph. i. ult. not *the fulness of him, who fills all in all.* Sometimes he has represented his relation to the Church by that of a marriage; and especially the *Gentile* church Psal. xlv. is call'd to remember, that *he is her Lord, and she* 11. *should worship him:* but how assuming would this be for any creature after the plain language of that antient

Are miniſters order'd to *lift up their voice with ſtrength*, to ſtand it out againſt all oppoſition, and not to be afraid in proclaiming a mere name, a bare title? The prophet, in his diſcourſes, takes off all ſurmiſes of that nature, when he deſcribes the God we are to ſpeak of: *Behold, the Lord God ſhall come with a ſtrong hand, and his arm ſhall rule for him: Behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He ſhall feed his flock like a ſhepherd, he ſhall gather the lambs with his arm, and ſhall carry 'em in his boſom, and ſhall gently lead thoſe that are with young.* You will eaſily allow the fitneſs of this character to our bleſſed Lord. Now, he that does theſe things, has *meaſur'd the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out the heaven with a ſpan*, and is call'd afterwards *the everlaſting God, the creator of the ends of the earth, who faints not, nor is weary, and there's no ſearching out of his underſtanding.*

Iſa. xl. 10, 11. ver. 12. v. 28.

As impertinent would it have been to go among the *Gentiles* with a report concerning a creature; it would have done no more than refine and elevate their idolatry. Their fault was not worſhiping the true God, and doing ſervice to thoſe that *by nature are no gods.* Bowing before the work of their hands was the aggravation and the folly of the crime; but the firſt error lay in paying this homage to any thing; and had they choſen the beſt of the creation for their idol, it was all one in the ſubſtance of the Action: the guilt had been the ſame to worſhip an Angel as to worſhip a fly; becauſe it was an alienation of that which could be only due to their Maker.

And muſt Chriſtianity, which is reveal'd to bring them to their God, rather keep 'em from him? They were bid to *believe in Chriſt Jeſus, to call on him*, to do it in hopes of ſalvation, to lay the whole weight of their faith and confidence there: and is not this as much as they could do

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SERM. XXVIII. to the true God? Do you imagine, if the Apoſtles knew Jeſus Chriſt to be no more than a creature, that they would in ſo looſe a way have recommended him as the object of all devotion and aſſurance? and this among people who had *gods many, and lords* or mediators *many* before? Would they not have diſtinguiſh'd a thouſand times between the duty they preſs'd to a Mediator, and that which was due to the Supreme Being; becauſe this was the very rock upon which the heathen had been ſplit before? Why would they in ſo unguarded a manner ſpeak of him as a God, without telling the people that they only us'd the word in a lower ſenſe? What pity is it they ſhould let the *Gentiles* run away with an error ſo much akin to that which they were brought up in?

Had ſome preachers of the new ſcheme in our polite age gone upon the miniſtry, there had been no danger; they would moſt certainly have taken care every time they call'd Chriſt by the name of God to explain it to 'em, that he was *not ſelf-originated*, if ſuch a rumbling word may be called an explication? There had been no ſnare in their prayers or ſermons, no aſcribing of glory to *him*, but rather *thro' him* to another. We ſhould have had a Goſpel well guarded with critical diſtinctions: But it's plain the Apoſtles went on in a more uncautious way, and made ſo little difference between the eſſential glories of the Father and Son, as has tempted thoſe who felt the power of their Goſpel to think there was none. Nay, really, as far as I have look'd into the Mahometan Religion, I muſt needs own, that 'tis a ſcheme more open and leſs deceitful than the Chriſtian, if Chriſt is not God. That perſon never call'd himſelf more than the great Prophet. He takes no titles in common with the Supreme Being; and therefore his followers are in no temptation to believe him

Where shall we look for the springs of this mo- SERM.
tion but into that sovereign goodness, *that is gra-* XXIX.
cious because it will be gracious, and shews mercy where it will shew mercy? Who can account for the distinction that he made between one of *Noah*'s posterity from the other two? Why must the revelation of a pure Gospel and a future hope be confin'd to them? Why did it after that still run narrower in the channel of one family? He acted in this as the proprietor of his own mercy, *who gives no account of his matters,* either in grace or nature.

And the question is as hard, why he should afterwards break down the enclosures of his own making, and send abroad without any limitations that truth that had been so long a peculiar? *By* Eph. iii. 3, *revelation he made known the mystery, which in other* 5, 6. *ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto the holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the Gospel.* If there was any reason for keeping it as a secret from some part of mankind, why did not that reason hold? Why must the argument of revealing himself to a peculiar people be only temporary, and he who delighted in the name of the God of *Israel*, take pleasure in being call'd *the God of the whole earth?*

Was there ever likelihood, that they who had been struck off should ever be taken in again? Or, that *Japhet*, who sunk into the same idolatry with *Ham*, should be *perswaded to dwell in the tents of Shem?* This stands as a wonder in our Bible, and it can appear no otherwise, considering that *when the most High divided to the nations their inhe-* Deut. *tance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the* xxxii. 8, *bounds of the people according to the number of the* 9. *children of Israel*; i. e. in ranging the whole world he had his eye to one nation, and gave the rest

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their ſhares, ſo as to ſerve the intereſt of theſe. *For the Lord's portion was his people, Jacob was the lot of his inheritance,* that which fell to him in the dividend that his providence made: And yet after this, the love that us'd to keep within bounds ſhone out at large, and became the glory of the univerſe. I muſt own, that ſuch a widening of religion was foretold, and therefore could not be a doctrine unknown to the fathers; but if we had taken our notions from appearances, we ſhould have thought that God's choice of the *Jews*, and his neglect of the *Gentiles*, had been for eternity. Becauſe,

2. Theſe *Gentiles* were no way prepar'd to receive the news of a Saviour when he came to be preach'd among them. *All nations walk'd in their own ways,* and at *Athens* in particular, they thought the Apoſtle *a babbler, a ſetter forth of ſtrange gods.* What a train of ceremonies, devotions, deliverances and revelations had the *Jews* on purpoſe to eſtabliſh their faith, and lead on their hope towards a great Redeemer? Scarce a prophet aroſe, but beſides his meſſage to them, that related to the particular duty and mercy of that day, he was ſtill looking and talking farther, foretelling things to come; as the Apoſtle ſays to the *Jews*, that *Moſes* was not only a ſervant to his own day, but a witneſs to ours. He was rais'd up and furniſh'd with a greater Spirit than what might bring them out of *Egypt*. There was a proſpect in all that he ſaid and did, a reference to future generations; for he told them, that *God would raiſe up unto them a Prophet like to him.* Nay, ſaith *Peter, All the prophets from Samuel, and thoſe that followed after, have likewiſe foretold of theſe days.*

Acts xiv. 16.

xvii. 18.

Acts iii. 24.

Tho' we are apt to run thro' thoſe books as ſo many hiſtories that reach'd no farther than to their own ages, yet you ſee he look'd upon them all as

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antient promise, *Thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of hosts is his name, and thy Redeemer the holy one of Israel, the Lord of the whole earth shall he be call'd?* Is it likely that one who is no more than a vicegerent deity would be rival to him who gave this assurance? Or is the Church under the new Testament plac'd in relation to a lower head than that under the old? No, his empire shall endure for ever. He is spoke of with all governing perfections, One *that searches the hearts, to render to every man according to his works*; one that is *with his people always to the end of the world*; one who lives *in them, and they in him*; *of whose fulness they receive, and grace for grace*; and therefore we must say to *Sion*, THY GOD *reigns.*

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Isa. liv. 5.

Rev. ii. 23. Matth. xxviii. 20. Joh. xiv. 20. i. 14.

SERMON XXIX.

June 7. 1719.

III. WE are to consider this branch of our religion as a MYSTERY; one of those things that man's wisdom teaches not, and which we can no otherwise know than by *comparing spiritual things with spiritual.* That God should be manifest in the flesh, is a doctrine that appears to our wonder; that he should be justified in the Spirit, carries us still farther beyond our depth; his being seen of Angels, and ador'd by a nature into which he never enter'd, swells up the admiration of the believer; and now it's another article of surprize, that he should be *preach'd among the Gentiles*, if you do but consider the following particulars.

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1. 'Tis myſterious, that the *Gentiles* who were neglected for ſo many ages ſhould have Chriſt Jeſus preach'd among them. What anſwer can be given to theſe two queſtions? Why God was ſo long ſilent to thoſe people, and why he ſpoke out at laſt? That *the wilderneſs and the ſolitary place ſhould be glad, and the deſert rejoice, and bloſſom as the roſe: That the glory of Lebanon ſhould be given to it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, that they ſhould ſee the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of the God of Iſrael!* We can reſolve it into nothing elſe but his own good pleaſure, *the counſel of his will; even ſo it ſeem'd good in his ſight.*

Iſa. xxxv. 1, 2.

You know what diminutive names the methods of providence drew upon thoſe poor people. The *Jews* call'd 'em no better than *dogs*, and our Saviour himſelf makes uſe of that language. The doctrines of religion were eſteem'd *the childrens bread*, and by no means to be *caſt* unto thoſe for whom they were never deſign'd. Thus it held for many generations, and yet at laſt, the Goſpel that ſeem'd to have crowded up it ſelf took pleaſure in a diffuſion. The great God gave ſuch a turn to the courſe of his providence as he never had done before, and unravell'd all the diſpoſitions of former ages. They who were *in times paſt Gentiles in the fleſh, called the uncircumciſion by thoſe who were the circumciſion in the fleſh made with hands; at that time they were without Chriſt, being aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael, ſtrangers from the covenants of promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Chriſt Jeſus, they who were ſometimes afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Chriſt.* Well might he ſay, that he would create a new thing in the earth, what had not been conceived or expected.

Eph. ii. 11, 12, 13.

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connected with *those last days* in which God has spoken to us by his Son. When *Abraham* was call'd out of *Ur* of the *Caldees*, God did not only promise him a great posterity, and a fine country, but the glory of the covenant lay in this, that *in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed.* To this end, when they were form'd and modell'd into a people, they had laws, judgments, statutes and ordinances. These were *figures for the time present, a shadow of good things to come.* Thus did God think fit to train them up, that all their worship should be directed to him, who is call'd the great *hope of Israel.* That Christ should come to *them* in person, and be preach'd among *them* after his resurrection, is no great wonder, as the Apostle tells them, *Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, And in thee shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first, God having raised up* ver. 25, 26. *his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquity.* And to this they gave witness in another place, *It was needful that* xiii. 45. *the Gospel should first be preach'd unto you.* This agrees to the order that Christ left with them to *begin at Jerusalem.* They were a people that sought him, and enquir'd diligently after him. *Theirs were* Rom. ix. *the fathers, and of them as concerning the flesh Christ* 4, 5. *came.*

But to the *Gentiles* he is reveal'd all at once; not like the sun in a clear morning that advances and opens his glory by degrees, but rather like a sudden rush of light in a cloudy and dark day. *When he sprinkles many nations, that which had not* Isa. lii. 15. *been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider.* This was a matter that could not enter into the imagination of men, and therefore when the Apostle brings in a proof of it out of the old Testament, he delivers it with this

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remark, that *Esaias is very bold*, he dares to say it, *I was found of them that sought me not, I was made manifest to them that asked not after me:* So he saith in *Osee, I will call them my people who were not my people, and her beloved, that was not beloved.*

Rom. x. 20. ix. 25.

They are to hear of him without any preparation of types and sacrifices. They had no *paschal Lamb* to tell them of the great atonement, no *High-priest* to represent the person of a Mediator, no *sprinkling of blood* to signify the virtue of his death, no *temple* to be an earnest of his incarnation: He came to them without any preliminary. This was the manner of entring that the Gospel had among 'em, *That they turned at once from idols to serve the living and true God.*

1 Thes. i. 9.

Tho' God was very near two thousand years in training one nation for a Redeemer, yet without any dawn he darts the light of the glorious Gospel among others. Upon which the Apostle puts the question, *What shall we say then?* q. d. we are quite lost in the mystery, and know not either how to get into it, or how to get out of it. 'Tis an entertainment, but yet 'tis a surprize, *That the Gentiles who followed not after righteousness*, never pretended to it, that these *have attained unto righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.* Well may we say, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways are past finding out! Who has directed the spirit of the Lord, and who has been his counsellor?* "Who gave certain rules to that "Spirit for so many ages, how to guide and pro- "portion the light that he distributed? Or who "at last set him at liberty, to do in redemption as "he did in creation, to move upon the face of the "waters, and bring light out of darkness all over "the world?

Rom. ix. 30. xi. 33, 34.

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What consistency can we find between the methods of providence in former ages, and those he has taken now? They thought that the Godhead was like to *silver, gold, or stone, graven by art and man's device: And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now he commands all men every where to repent: Because he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he has ordain'd; whereof he has given assurance to all men in raising him from the dead.* Acts xvii. 23, 30, 31.

3. It is still more mysterious, that the *Jews* should reject a Saviour who was to be preach'd among the *Gentiles*. This I mention only as an introduction to the following head. That he who was to be the *desire of all nations*, should be the contempt of his own; for *he came to his own, and his own received him not*. And when *Moses* is read, who testified of him, *To this day the vail is upon their hearts, for they cannot see to the end of those things that were to be abolished.* All the preparations of sacrifice, worship, types and promises were lost upon them. They *search'd the Scriptures*, in hopes of finding eternal life; and yet tho' these were they that testified of him, *They would not come unto him that they might have life*. The chief-priests who had the best education and opportunity to know his character, *the princes of this world*, were strangers to the wisdom we preach, for *had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory*. These rag'd with an envy as high as their station; and the admirers of the temple-service, whose devotion should have led them towards him, pursu'd his doctrine and his life with all the violence they could use. *Israel which followed after the law of righteousness has not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone.* Now is it not much, that he who was to

Hag. ii. 6. Joh. i. 11. 2 Cor. iii. 15. Joh. v. 39, 40. 1 Cor. ii. 8. Rom. ix. 31, 32.

SERM. XXIX. be the Saviour of the world, and bring a bleſſing to all the families of the earth, ſhould be thus unknown in a country where he had been expected? That he ſhould *find no faith* where there had been ſo much *viſion?* And yet,

4. After his diſgrace from the *Jews*, he is made the ſubject of our miniſtry. He ſaid, *I have laboured in vain, and have ſpent my ſtrength for nought, yet ſurely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God. And now, ſaith the Lord, who formed me from the womb to be his ſervant, to bring Jacob again to him, though Iſrael be not gathered, yet ſhall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God ſhall be my ſtrength. And he ſaid, it is a light thing that thou ſhouldſt be my ſervant to raiſe up the tribes of Jacob, and to reſtore the preſerved of Iſrael; I will alſo give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayeſt be my ſalvation to the ends of the earth. Thus ſaith the Lord, the Redeemer of Iſrael, and his holy One, to him whom man deſpiſes, to him whom the nation abhors, to a ſervant of rulers, kings ſhall ſee and ariſe, princes alſo ſhall worſhip, becauſe of the Lord that is faithful, and the holy One of Iſrael, and he ſhall chooſe thee. Thus ſaith the Lord, in an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of ſalvation have I helped thee; and I will preſerve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to eſtabliſh the earth, and to cauſe to inherit the deſolate heritages.*

Iſai. xlix. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

If we had conſider'd the revelation of a Saviour, as an attempt made upon the world, how far it would take, we ſhould think it in vain to go any further after this miſcarriage among a choſen people. 'Twas time to give up the deſign, as that which was never like to ſucceed, or bring forth fruit to account. But this was no hindrance, for *thro' the fall of the Jews ſalvation is come to the Gentiles, the diminiſhing of them was the riches of the*

Rom xi. 11, 12.

world. If they did not receive him, who had been waiting for him, and had convers'd with him in types and shadows, how could it be expected that the uncultivated part of mankind should harbour a Gospel of which they had no warning?

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And yet so it was; for the usage he met with from the *Jews*, and which deliver'd his name to so much contempt among 'em, became a part of the doctrine which was preach'd among the *Gentiles*, I mean his *obedience to death, even the death of the cross.* 'Twas an objection against him then, *He sav'd others, himself he cannot save. If he be the Christ of God, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe.* As he did not come down, it was a protection to their infidelity. They then thought themselves justified to all the world, in calling him a deceiver; so that though he had done many miracles, and taught the will of God perfectly, yet this last reproach, his dying in a curs'd way, ras'd out all his former character, and made every thing he had said or done pass for nothing.

Mar. xxvii. 42.

And yet with this disadvantageous article did the Apostles go out into the world. They made no secret of that death which the enemy derided: *They preach'd Christ Jesus and him crucified.* And is it not strange, that a doctrine which startled the *Jews*, in the very sound, should be received by the *Gentiles?* To a *Jew* such a principle must be prov'd. When they *open'd and alledg'd that Christ must needs have suffer'd*, it could be only out of *their* writings, but to the *Gentiles* this was a thing totally unknown; they had no prophesies, no types or sacrifice of divine appointment to be the figures of a propitiation to come, and yet with these unconceivable doctrines were preachers to go abroad. They were not asham'd of the cross of Christ, but *glory* in it. Through

1 Cor. ii. 2.

Act. xvii. 3.

SERM. XXIX. that truth they declar'd a God who *pardon'd iniquity, transgression and sin*, and brought to the world the glad tidings of salvation and eternity.

And is it not much, that this article should make its way among the *Gentiles*, which had been derided by the people, who alone were prepared to receive it? That *the stone rejected of the builders should be afterwards made the head of the corner: This is the doing of the Lord, and it is marvellous in our eyes.* The *Jews* and the Priests among 'em were the builders by profession, and by distinction: They rejected a Stone of the greatest value, and yet this is made the head of the corner! The ground of that whole building, which *fitly fram'd together, grows unto a holy temple in the Lord:* The vast fabrick that takes in the people of God all over the earth, and this is the doing of the Lord; so is every thing in providence, but it is *his work* in a more eminent sense, it expresses his wisdom, his sovereignty and universal goodness, it's full of his glory, it bears his image, and it's wondrous in our eyes; in the very eyes of a believer it does not cease to be a mystery. They see something in it that shews the contrivance is to be rather admir'd than explain'd. We stand amaz'd at it, as that which carries up our thoughts so far, that we can neither get forwards nor backwards, can neither leave the subject with indifference, nor comprehend it with knowledge.

Mar. xii. 10, 11.

Eph. ii. ult.

5. That Christ should be preach'd to the *Gentiles*, is what he himself put a bar in the way of. He acted all along as a *Jew*, as *a minister of the circumcision*. He submitted to their ordinances, worshiped at their temple, convers'd only with them, never begun the practice of that religion that was to obtain after his death. He continued an example of the ceremonial worship as long as he liv'd. He acquainted the poor woman of *Canaan* with the general

neral rule of his practice, that *he was not sent but* SERM.
to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He charg'd XXIX.
the seventy disciples *not to go into the way of the Gentiles, or enter into any city or village of the Samaritans.*

Who would think by such a method of living, that he had any design of extending his Gospel beyond his ministry? Or that the one should go where the other never came? What pains did he take with *the generation of his wrath?* How did he pursue 'em with doctrines, strike 'em with miracles, do those works among 'em that never man did, and yet they *hated both him and his father*? What a concern did he Joh. xv.
shew for them at last, when he passed the great sentence 24.
upon 'em; for *when he beheld the city, he wept over* Luke xix.
it, and said, O that thou hadst known, even thou, at 42.
least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes! It is apparent, as he speaks by the prophet, that *his bowels were turn'd within him, and his repentings kindled together.* He knew not how to give 'em up, to make them *as Admah, and set them as Zeboim.* None of this pity discovers it self to those that were then without Christ *and aliens to the commonwealth of Israel.* He never makes them one visit, or sends them one message; and yet that ungrateful nation, who had been so long his favourites, were to be cast off, and left to a *spirit of slumber*: and on the other hand, the *Gentiles* who seem'd to have so little room in his thoughts, were to have the distinction of his love.

He orders the Apostles to be his *witnesses to the* Acts i. 7.
uttermost ends of the earth; and it is not unlikely that he might acquaint them with the success of their Gospel as he did *Paul, Make haste, and get* xxii. 18.
thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. Thus he saith to those at *Rome, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the pro-*

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phet to our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see and shall not perceive; i.e. they were to have the means of grace to no purpose: *But be it known unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it.*

xxviii. 25, 26, 27, 28.

'Tis strange he should act as if he never knew that before. Why did he not make a trial in his own life-time, What good was to be done in those parts of the earth that had all along lain waste? Why did he not break up the fallow-ground himself, but leave it all to be done by his disciples? He was the great subject of the ministry into which he put his servants, but in many cases he was not their example. They preach where he did not; they go where he would never come: and it's rather after his death than during his life, that he is *to lighten the Gentiles*, and be a salvation *to the ends of the earth.*

6. This was a thing never to be conceiv'd of by the *Jews*. As their minds were blinded to a Saviour, so they were towards a Gospel, and one great end of sending it into the world. The passages are plain enough, that he was to be *the desire of all nations* and the *governor* among them; that all *the gathering of the people would be to him*, and *all the families of the earth blessed in him*; that the *barren who did not bear was to sing aloud, for more were the children of the desolate than of the married wife.* Such promises as these lie thick in the old Testament, and yet when there's any mention of a design that way, the *Jews* receiv'd it as a piece of blasphemy or enthusiasm. Thus when Christ tells them, *Whither I go ye cannot come.* What's their way of expounding it? *Whither will he go that we cannot find him? will he go and teach the Gentiles, or to the dispersed among the Gentiles?* You see by the latter part of that sentence, that they could hardly

Hag. ii. 6. Psal. xxii. 28. Gen. xlix. 10. Isa. liv. 1, 2.

conceive

conceive him guilty of so monstrous a thing as that he should go to teach the Gentiles, but only the dispers'd among 'em, the *Jews* who were scatter'd abroad.

What an offence was it that he should receive publicans, and eat with them? When *Zaccheus* invited him to his house, they were startled: *This man is gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner.* Luke xix. 7. They did not mean one that is partaker of a polluted nature, for all are sinners in that sense; but a foreigner, a Gentile, one that was defil'd by his profession, who lay out of the pale of the church, and was a sinner by birth: They thought it quite wrong in a prophet, and much more in a Saviour, to go into the house of such a one. And the explication he gives was not very satisfactory to 'em, that *this man is also a son of Abraham.* That title was founded on the real sense and meaning of the promise; but it would be very strange to those that heard it.

And you need be in no surprize, that after his death the Apostles drew all the enmity of the *Jews* upon them, whenever they talk'd of the extent of their own commission. Thus was *Paul* receiv'd in the defence that he made; he runs over a noble argument full of learning and evidence; he gives 'em the story of his own conversion, a fact that could neither be denied nor born down: But when he mentions the divine order, *Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles,* it is said, *they gave him audience to this word, and then lift up their voices, crying, Away with such a fellow from the earth, it is not fit that he should live.* The very naming of that design is what they could not endure; so far had pride possess'd itself of every faculty, that they were uncapable of thinking about such a matter, as if it was in their power to have contradict-

Acts xxii. 21, 22.

ed

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ed that argument: *Is he the God of the Jews, and not of the Gentiles? yes, of the Gentiles also.*

They imagin'd that a converſation with theſe poor people was defiling, as *Peter* owns in his ſpeech

x. 28. to *Cornelius: Ye know that it is unlawful for a Jew to keep company, or come to one of another nation.* They make a heavy charge againſt *Paul*, and would deliver him over to the tumult of the people:

xxi. 28. *Help, O men of Iſrael, for this is the man who teaches all men, every where againſt the law, and further, has alſo brought Greeks into the temple, to pollute this holy place.* Tho' this is what they had but an imperfect evidence of, for *they had ſeen before with him in the city Trophimus an Epheſian, whom they ſuppos'd Paul had brought into the temple.* The cry moves the city, the people run together, and are going about to kill him. Such a myſtery was this to thoſe to whom God had committed the lively oracles, that they were not able to make it paſs upon their minds, that there could be any mercy for the reſt of the world.

7. Tis what the Apoſtles themſelves came into very unwillingly: their thoughts were of a national caſt as well as others; and this ſtuck by 'em a long time. For after his reſurrection, when he tells 'em they muſt *wait for the promiſe of the Father which they had heard of him*, they immediately catch

Acts i. 6. at that as a political mercy: *Lord, wilt thou at this time reſtore the kingdom to Iſrael?* he anſwers 'em, *It's not for you to know the times and ſeaſons, which the Father has put in his own power*; but then tells 'em, that this promiſe was for other ends, that *they* might be *his witneſſes in Jeruſalem, and Judea, and Samaria, and to the uttermoſt parts of the earth.*

You find, after this, with what reluctance they went away farther than their own country. The perſecution that aroſe about *Stephen* was a means to ſcatter

scatter 'em to *Phenice*, and *Cyprus*, and *Antioch*, *preaching the word to none but the Jews only. Philip* about the same time is driven to *Samaria*, where he had mighty success, for *many believ'd in the name of the Lord, and there was great joy in that city. Peter* has a vision which brings him an account of his duty, and answers the arguments that he had rais'd against it. For when he saith, upon the descending of that sheet that had four-footed beasts and creeping things, *Lord, I have never eaten any thing common or unclean: the voice saith to him, What God has cleans'd, call not thou common.* This he knew not the meaning of till he went to *Cornelius*, and there he delivers the sense of the vision: *I perceive God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that fears him, and works righteousness, is accepted of him.* And says farther, *God has shewn me that I ought to call no man common.*

xi. 19. x. 34, 35.

One would think there was very little need of these extraordinary methods to impress upon 'em so plain a duty as that of preaching to the Gentiles; and yet the prejudice of education lay so deep, that it must be rooted out by an uncommon argument. Nay, the good people who attended him are amaz'd, *when they saw the holy Ghost descend upon the Gentiles.* What? could they imagine that the holy Ghost was not a free agent? Had not Christ told 'em, he blows where he listeth? Besides, *Peter* is forc'd to argue upon this conviction: *Can any man forbid water why these should not be baptiz'd, who have receiv'd the holy Ghost as well as we?* Nay, after this, the very Apostles and brethren object it against him: *Thou wentest to men uncircumcis'd, and didst eat with them.* Upon which he is oblig'd to *rehearse the matter from the beginning*, and he reckons it no less than *a withstanding of God*, if he should have acted otherwise.

ver. 45. xi. 3.

Saul

SERM. XXIX. *Saul* had his commiſſion at his converſion. Chriſt ſaith to him, *I will deliver thee from the people, and the Gentiles, to whom now I ſend thee, to turn them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan to the living God, that they may receive a remiſſion of their ſins.* And he comes readily into it, as he tells the king: *Whereupon, O Agrippa, I was not diſobedient to the heavenly viſion, but ſhew'd firſt to them of Damaſcus, and at Jeruſalem, and throughout all the Coaſts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they ſhould repent and turn to God, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance.* We find indeed all along, that he made his firſt addreſſes to the *Jews*. When he came to *Antioch*, in *Piſidia*, he got into one of their ſynagogues, and introduces his diſcourſe in this manner: *Men of Iſrael, and ye that fear God, give audience:* and upon their refuſal, he tells 'em, *It was needful that the word of God ſhould firſt be ſpoken to you; but ſeeing that ye have put it far from you, and judg'd yourſelves unworthy of everlaſting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles: for ſo the Lord has commanded us, ſaying, I have ſet thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou ſhouldſt be for ſalvation to the ends of the earth.* And as Chriſt had told him, that having born witneſs for him at *Jeruſalem*, he ſhould alſo bear teſtimony for him at *Rome*, when he comes thither, he firſt ſends for the *Jews*, and tells 'em, that *tho' he had committed nothing againſt the people and cuſtoms of their fathers, yet he was deliver'd priſoner to the Romans; for which cauſe*, ſaith he, *I have ſent for you, to ſee and to ſpeak with you, becauſe for the hope of Iſrael I am bound with this chain.* And when he found his labours among them in vain, then he talks of *turning to the Gentiles:* So that after that, *he dwelt two whole years in his own hired houſe, and received* ALL *that came to him; preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching thoſe things that concern the Lord Jeſus Chriſt with all confidence.*

xxvi. 18, 19, 20.

xiii. 16.

ver. 46.

xxviii. 20.

8. It

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8. It is some part of the wonder, that the preaching among the Gentiles should be put into such hands: *Are not these men that speak Galileans? and how is it that we hear among them in our own tongues the wonderful works of God?* Had he rais'd up at first, as he did afterwards, persons out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, who were acquainted with the language and methods of their own country, it had not been so much. Acts ii. 8.

But he makes choice of a company of *Jews* who were every where hated: *These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to believe, being Romans.* These he furnishes with *all qualifications:* they have the gift of tongues, by which they are endu'd with power from on high. This was a mighty wonder indeed, and therefore the Apostle puts it upon the rewards of Christ for his sufferings; *being exalted by the right hand of God, and having receiv'd of the Father the promise of the holy Ghost, he has shed forth that which ye now see and hear.* xvi. 20, 21.

Nor is it less remarkable that men of a private life should be call'd to stand it out against the face of the world: That persons of a low education, who were no way prepar'd for hurry and bustle, should come joyfully into a fatigue that carried in it all manner of dangers. What can we ascribe this to, but *the power of Christ resting upon them? God bare 'em witness by divers signs, and wonders, and miracles, and gifts of the holy Ghost, according to his own will.* They were never either to be hir'd or daunted from their duty, but went *thro' honour and dishonour, good report and bad report, as deceivers and yet true, as unknown, and yet well known.* They were despis'd and misrepresented; and because their doctrine was unwelcome, therefore their persons were hated. And indeed this is the constant lot Heb. ii. 4. 2 Cor. vi. 8, 9.

of

SERM. XXX. of those that will be faithful. The Apostle tells *Timothy*, there are *some who resist the truth, men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.* But, 2 Tim. iii. 8, 10. saith he by way of encouragement, *Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra, what persecutions I endur'd; but out of 'em all the Lord deliver'd me.*

June 21, 1719.

SERMON XXX.

THIS last particular may be distributed into several others that are contain'd in it: as, That he fetch'd men out of a private life into a service for which their education had no way prepar'd 'em: That he had made 'em run into dangers which they might have shunn'd; and that with the greatest alacrity and obedience: That he furnish'd 'em with the gift of tongues, which had never been known in the world before; and that he call'd most of 'em to seal the truth with their blood, that they might give the greatest testimony of nature to the doctrines of grace.

1. The persons he employ'd were no way prepar'd by education for that life of public service into which he call'd 'em: 1 Cor. i. 27, 28, 29. *He chose the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty: And base things of the world, and things despised, nay, things that are not, to bring to nought things that are,*

that

that no flesh should glory in his presence. He that hed the earth, and the fulness thereof, could easily have supply'd himself with the best of its learning; but it stands among the wonders and delights of a Saviour, that he run cross to the expectations and measures of human reason. SERM. XXX.

That might be call'd a polite age with as much truth as any other. The zeal of the *Jews* for the ritual part of devotion went higher than ever it had done: *They rested in the law, and approv'd the things that were more excellent: they made their boast of God, and were confident that they themselves were guides of the blind, and instructers of the foolish, having a form of knowledge and of truth in the law.* And yet both in giving holiness, and granting commissions, he slides over men of shining parts, and vast attainments, and chooses his servants where no one else would have done. 'Tis this, I say, that gave our dear Redeemer a pleasure at his very soul: *In that hour Jesus rejoic'd in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast reveal'd 'em unto babes: Even so Father, because it seem'd good in thy sight.* He also affirms his own share in the great disposal: *All things are deliver'd to me by my Father, and no man knows who the Son is but the Father, and none knows who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.* So that what is call'd the Father's making known these things to babes in one verse, is call'd the *Son's revealing* 'em in another: And as he had ascrib'd it to the mere sovereign pleasure of God, so here it is represented as his own choice. 'Tis the Son's own *will* that inclines him to make the revelation. It stands in this account as a free and spontaneous act. And he that made known these things is consider'd three ways, which are all wonderful. Rom. ii. 18, 19, 20. Mat. xi. 25, 26.

First,

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First, That this was not owing to any ſcarcity in the creation, for he that does it is *Lord of heaven and earth*. He could have committed the Goſpel, as he did the law, *to the diſpoſition of Angels*, being the ſovereign of that upper world where they are; or he could have furniſh'd himſelf from the ſchools of the Gentiles, and the temple of the *Jews*, with men who were either *mighty in the Scriptures*, or maſters in the faculty of turning an argument. But,

Secondly, Inſtead of employing them as neceſſary to his cauſe, he threw a vail over their glory: *He hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent:* they above all others fell at this *ſtumbling-ſtone:* As it was foretold that the foundation laid in *Sion* would be *a rock of offence, a gin and a ſnare to both the houſes of Iſrael, and the inhabitants in Jeruſalem.* None of the princes of this world knew the wiſdom that we preach, as appears by their crucifying the Lord of glory. Theſe men that were wiſe and prudent, not only in their own opinion, but in the public voice of fame, are all in the dark about the great article of ſalvation. And,

Thirdly, Theſe things he reveals unto *babes*; ſometimes, to ſuch as were *literally ſo; for out of the mouths of ſucklings he ordained ſtrength.* Of this he gave the world a ſample at his triumphant entry into *Jeruſalem*, when *the children ſung before him, Hoſannah to the Son of David, bleſſed be the kingdom of the Lord, Hoſannah in the higheſt.* To this they were preſs'd by a miraculous influence, as he ſaith, *If theſe ſhould altogether hold their peace, the ſtones would immediately cry out.* But I believe the name that he calls 'em by ſignifies *the lowneſs of their preparation*, that they were no more fit for the deſign than ſo many *babes:* they were ſo far from ſpeaking other tongues, that they could hardly ſpeak their own. This is a thing that our Lord contemplates

Pſ. viii. 2.

Luke xix. 37.

templates a long while before it was accompliſh'd. He does not only acquieſce in it, *So, Father, it ſeemed good in thy ſight*, but it made him *rejoice in ſpirit*. Tho' but a little before, he had complain'd how vain his own attempts had been for the reformation of the world in *Chorazin* and *Bethſaida*, yet *in that hour* he felt all theſe joys within him. SERM. XXX.

And whom did he chuſe, but men of an obſcure character? *Where is the wiſe? where is the ſcribe? where is the diſputer of this world? has not God made fooliſh the wiſdom of this world?* How? by laying all aſide in ſpreading the Goſpel: *For after that in the wiſdom of God, the world by wiſdom knew not God: it pleas'd God by the fooliſhneſs of preaching, to ſave them that believe.* It was once reckon'd wonderful, that he match'd the employment of his ſervant in a private life, to what he deſign'd him for of a more public nature: *He choſe David from following the ſheep, and feeding the ews great with young, to feed Jacob his people, and Iſrael his inheritance.* There's both a beauty and a ſurprize in the ſimilitude. And ſo he did here; He calls a company of perſons out of ſhips or boats where they were mending their nets, and tells 'em, he would make 'em *fiſhers of men*. Upon this they forſook all and follow'd him: a ſtrange call, and a ſtrange obedience! 1 Cor. i. 20, 21. Pſ. lxxviii. 70, 71.

Moſes, tho' he had been brought up at court, and was skill'd in all the wiſdom and learning of the *Egyptians*, cries out, *Lord, who am I that I ſhould ſpeak to Pharaoh?* He pleads his being of *uncircumcis'd lips*, by which I ſuppoſe he means ſome unhappineſs in his pronunciation; becauſe God gives him theſe anſwers: *Who has made man's mouth? or who made the dumb? and I know that Aaron thy brother can ſpeak well.* But there's more room for the objection in a company of poor people who ſcarce ever went farther than the lake of *Tiberias*.

SERM. XXX. Might not they have thought it an extraordinary proposal, to be told that they should go over the world, and confront the learning of all the places that they came into, by the success of their Gospel, *leading princes away spoil'd, and making judges fools? Ye shall be brought*, saith their great Master, Luke xxi. 12, 13, 14, 15. *before kings and rulers for my name's sake, and it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts not to meditate before what ye shall answer; for I will give you a mouth and a wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist.*

This was a surprize to the council at *Jerusalem*: Acts iv. 23. *They perceiv'd the boldness of Peter and John, and seeing that they were ignorant and unlearn'd men, they marvell'd at it, and took knowledge of 'em that they had been with Jesus.* So that here, you see, they renew the questions that had been put about Christ himself: How *knows this man letters, having never* Mar. vi. 3. *learn'd?* and, *Is not this the carpenter's son; from whence then had he these mighty works?* And yet they perceiv'd in them such a boldness as gave 'em a great deal more than a courage to speak; for that of itself is not always an excellency: but this took into it the several capacities of reasoning, that they spake with an evidence that was neither to be daunted nor evaded.

Was it likely, that in such hands as these the greatest wisdom that was ever made known to the world should get forwards into the nations afar off, and like the power of the sun, nothing should be hid from the heat that attended it? This is a mystery indeed, and shews the value of that effusion in which the Spirit was given out. For these disciples were very raw and unprepar'd even after Christ's resurrection to undertake a matter of so much importance. They did not understand the nature of that kingdom which they were to preach; but when they were endu'd with a power from on high,

high, it was a ſending forth both *of light and truth.* As our Lord tells 'em, *I have many things to ſay, but ye cannot bear 'em now; howbeit, when He the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth.* He made 'em miniſters *accordi g to the gift of the grace of God, given to 'em by the effectual working of his power.* SERM. XXX. Joh. xvi. 12, 13. Eph. iii. 7.

2. 'Tis ſtill farther a myſtery, in the way that God took to ſpread this Goſpel among the Gentiles, that he ſhould raiſe up theſe men to run all manner of dangers, who might have liv'd ſecure and protected: *He ſet forth the Apoſtles, as it were appointed to death; they were made a ſpectacle to the world, to Angels, and to men; fools for Chriſt's ſake, weak and deſpis'd: they hungred and thirſted, were naked and buffetted, and had no certain dwelling place: they labour'd working with their own hands; revil'd, perſecuted, defam'd, made the filth of the world, and the offſcouring of all things.* And yet he dealt fairly by 'em: He gave 'em ſuch warnings and inſtructions about the work, as would rather have frighted people, than perſuaded 'em into it: *The time comes that he that kills you will think he does God ſervice; and theſe things they will do unto you, becauſe they have not known the Father nor me.* He tells *Peter* in particular, *When thou waſt young, thou wenteſt whither thou wouldſt*, that part of thy life was eaſie enough; *but when thou ſhalt be old, they ſhall bind thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldſt not; and this he ſaid ſignifying by what death he ſhould glorifie God.* 1 Cor. iv. 9—13. Joh. xvi. 2, 3. xxi. 18, 19.

But that very conſideration of his death made it eaſie to him; he calls it no more than *putting off this tabernacle, as the Lord Jeſus Chriſt had ſhew'd to him.* Another Apoſtle ſaith, this was *his earneſt expectation and deſire, that in all things Chriſt may be magnified in his body, whether it be by life or death.* Many of his followers, when he open'd to 'em the hardſhips that were coming on, *went back, and walk'd* 2 Pet. i. 14. Phil. i. 20. Joh. vi. 66.

SERM. XXX.

walk'd no more with him. Swarms of such as those have gone off in every age; *Demas* forsook *Paul*, and *all they in Asia left him.* But Christ knew whom he had chosen, and the virtue of that choice. There were many who *hazarded their lives for the sake of the Lord Jesus.* 'Tis almost an indisputable maxim in our day, that take away preferments and rewards from preachers, and the church is in danger: but here are ministers that had not so much as an human protection. I hope then the number of hirelings in this age leaves us in no doubt of the *mystery* that ever Christ should be preach'd to the Gentiles, by those who *approv'd themselves the ministers of God in much patience, afflictions, necessities, distresses; in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults.* This is well express'd by a Poet of our own.

2 Tim. i. 15.

Acts xv. 26.

2 Cor. vi. 4, 5.

From whence but heaven could men, unskill'd in arts,
In different ages born, in several parts,
Weave such agreeing truths? or how, or why,
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lye?
Unask'd their pains, ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gains, and martyrdom their price?

3. The great wonder of all is, that they should be qualified with the gift of tongues. This was a thing never heard of before; it only came to pass in the last days. God usually employ'd his prophets in their own country, or in those neighbouring kingdoms where the language was much the same; but here are men sent to all nations, to *every creature under heaven*, and wherever they come, they have no need to speak by an interpreter, which is both a slow and a cold way of conversation. And this he design'd to distinguish as a mystery, because it is the peculiar of that age, and that sett of preachers: for *tongues were to cease*, and this sort of

Col. i. 23.

1 Cor. xiii. 8.

knowledge

knowledge to vaniſh away. As no generation had it before, ſo none had it after; for which we may give ſeveral reaſons. SERM. XXX.

This was to be the handſel of a Redeemer's government below, and the firſt aſſurance of his welcome above. He had but newly left his diſciples, not without the contempt of the world, and ſome diffidence in themſelves. What they wanted to know was, whether this death which had been ſo ſcandalous on earth, had met with any more credit in heaven, and to be ſecure that his empire among men was eſtabliſh'd, and ſhould be promoted. Well, this they are to be convinc'd of by ſuch an effuſion of the Spirit, as was never known to their fathers, and ſhould never be renew'd to their children: *He being exalted by the right hand of God, and having receiv'd of the Father the promiſe of the holy Ghoſt, ſhed forth that which they ſaw and heard.* Thus *the ſalvation, that began to be ſpoke to the world by the Lord Jeſus, was afterwards confirm'd by thoſe that heard him, God bearing 'em witneſs by divers ſigns, and miracles, and gifts of the holy Ghoſt according to his own will.* Theſe tongues were to be for a *ſign* that the commiſſion was from God, and alſo a *means* of making known to the Gentiles what was appointed *for obedience of faith among all nations thro' the name of Chriſt.* Heb. ii. 4. Rom. xvi. 26.

At the building of *Babel*, which the ſons of men deſign'd for a tower to reach to heaven, God came down and confounded their language. This was a new embarraſment to the truth; it was from that time a great deal harder for people to help one another in uſeful knowledge. But here was going to be another tower, that ſhould actually reach *to heaven, a building of God, an houſe not made with hands:* he therefore comes down, and razes out the former confuſion. Tho' the world continu'd to talk many languages, yet he furniſh'd a ſett of men

SERM. XXX. with capacities to speak 'em all: *They spake with other tongues, as the Spirit gave 'em utterance.* Thus *many ran to and fro, and knowledge was increased.* *After the Lord had spoken to 'em, he was receiv'd up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God; and they went forth, and preach'd every where.*

Acts ii. 4. Dan. xii. 4. Mar. xiv. 19, 20.

4. He call'd most of 'em to seal this truth with their blood, which was the highest testimony that nature could give to what grace had taught: *They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony*; no terror could drive 'em from it. By their fall they conquer'd; their dying was voluntary, *they lov'd not their lives unto the death.* There was something else which they lov'd better. Now, this is so far from being a duty, that by the law of nature, it is the greatest of sins. 'Tis also against all the course of nature; it overrules the first principle in it, and that is self-preservation: *No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but lov'd and cherish'd it.* And when any were witnesses to a cause that way, you must suppose they had in 'em either something below nature, or something above it.

Rev. xii. 11.

And yet thus it was with them: *Paul* at his conversion was shewn *what great things he should suffer for the name of Christ:* 'twas but a rough setting out, for the *Jews* to *go about to kill him*, as soon as he begun to preach the Gospel. He had a narrow 'scape from *Aretas the king of Damascus, when he was let down the wall by a basket.* He was thrown out of all the favour and fame that he had so long courted in the *Jewish* nation, and yet he looks back upon it with a noble unconcern: *He counted it but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, for whom he had suffer'd the loss of all things, and counted 'em but dung, that he might win Christ.* He was in *labours abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times he receiv'd forty stripes save one.*

Acts ix. 16.

2 Cor. xi. ult.

Phil. iii. 8.

2 Cor. xi. 23, — 27.

Thrice

Thrice he was beaten with rods, once he was ſton'd, SERM.
thrice he ſuffer'd ſhipwreck, a day and a night he was XXX.
in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, robbers, by his own countrymen, heathens, in the city, the wilderneſs, the ſea, and among falſe brethren. Nor did theſe things grieve and tire him out: but when *the time of his departure is at hand, he is ready* 2 Tim. iv.
to be offer'd up, having fought a good fight, and finiſh'd 6.
his courſe, and kept the faith, without which all the reſt had been impoſſible.

Now, let us ſee FOR WHOM they did this.

1. Tis plain they took it for the cauſe of *Chriſt.*

2. They depended upon *his* preſence with 'em.

3. This was as much as they could *do* for God, and as much as they could *expect* from him.

1. 'Tis evident by all the profeſſion they made that this was for the ſake of Chriſt. They were *witneſſes of him*; they bore *the teſtimony of Jeſus,* Col. i. 28.
whom they preach'd, warning every man. Lord, what Acts ix. 6.
wilt THOU *have me to do?* was the language of *Saul.*
Ananias tells him, *The Lord, even Jeſus who appear'd* ver. 17.
unto thee in the way as thou cameſt, has ſent me to thee that thou mighteſt know HIS *will, and be filled with the holy Ghoſt.* He was to *ſee that juſt One,* xxii. 14,
and hear the word of HIS *mouth, and be* HIS *witneſs* 15.
to all men. The Goſpel that he preach'd was *neither receiv'd of man, nor by man, but by the revelation* Gal. i. 12.
of Jeſus Chriſt. To this purpoſe, ſaith our Saviour, *have I appear'd unto thee, to make thee a miniſter and* Acts xxvi.
a witneſs of theſe things that thou haſt ſeen, and thoſe 16.
in which I will farther appear unto thee. He determin'd to know, or make known *nothing but Jeſus* 1 Cor. ii.
Chriſt, and him crucified; which in the former verſe 2.
he had call'd *the teſtimony of* GOD. He preach'd not himſelf, but *Chriſt Jeſus the Lord,* and himſelf a ſervant for *Jeſus ſake,* ſtill referring the ultimate glory thither. Sometimes they were call'd *the ſervants of God in the Goſpel of his Son,* and *the ſer-* Rom. i. 2.

SERM. XXX.

vants of the most high God, who shew'd the way of salvation. Thus saith *Paul, God is my record, whom I serve with a pure conscience.* But these expressions are so thrown in common with others, of our preaching, serving and obeying Christ, that if they do not mean the same, here are two things unhappily confounded in one description. *The Gospel of Christ* is call'd *the power of God.*

Rom. ii. 6.

2. In this work they depended on HIS presence with 'em. He would not leave them comfortless, but *come and see them.* After his resurrection, *the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. He spake to them forty days of things pertaining to the kingdom of* GOD. This was delightful conversation indeed! They were afraid of the *Jews*, and had the doors shut, but when Jesus came in, those fears would soon be over. He might say then with more impression than he had done before, *It is I, be not afraid.* During that stage, between his coming out of the grave, and his going up into glory, they were rais'd above all their troubles. But, what should they do afterwards, when, as he tells them, they must *see him no more?* That is, they were to *know him no more after the flesh.*

Joh. xx. 20. Acts i. 2.

Well, that they might be provided for all dangers, when he sends them to disciple all nations, he promises to be *with 'em always to the end of the world.* I don't envy our criticks all their gains by the interpretation of these words, *viz.* that they signify no more than to the end of that age. For though that uncomfortable exposition may be easily dissolved, yet *even this* carries more in it than they would gladly allow. For according to their own way of reckoning, Christ might be present with the Apostles after he was gone to heaven; that he could be both upon earth and in heaven at one time; and if he could do this for the space of forty years, he can as easily do it till the consumma-

Matth. xxviii. 20.

tion

tion of all things. It was this that carried the Apoſtles thro' all their troubles. *I will deliver thee,* ſaith he to *Paul, from the people, and the Gentiles, to whom I ſend thee.* And when he ſpeaks of the ſucceſs of this promiſe that was given him by *Chriſt*, he calls it *obtaining help from* GOD. The one is plainly match'd unto the other, being only two parts of the ſame ſpeech. SERM. XXX. Act. xxvi. 20.

3. This was as much duty as they could pay to the great God, and this preſence as much as they could expect from him. Was it only a creature, for the advancing of whoſe kingdom, there were ſuch preparations made, as the world never knew before? Conſider three things, he had the greateſt glory that ever was given, the moſt entire duty that could ever be paid, and he maintain'd this intereſt in the moſt divine way that ever was heard of.

(1.) The glory deſign'd for him was of the greateſt ſort. It exceeded all that could be fetched out of the creation. *The heavens declare the glory of the Lord, and the firmament ſhews his handy-work. Day unto day utters ſpeech, and night unto night declares knowledge; and there is no voice or language where their ſpeech is not heard.* What Lord is this who has his honour ſo eſtabliſh'd in thoſe bright and rolling worlds, but the Lord that made them? the Supreme Being *by whom are all things, and for whom are all things?* The Scripture has ſhewn us that this is his work, *Of old haſt thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heaven is the work of his hands.* Pſal. xix. 1, 2, 3. Heb. i. 10.

And therefore that notion that the great God created the ſecond Perſon, and then order'd him to make the world, muſt be handled very gently, or it will be cruſh'd before the moth. We read of no ſuch *round-about creation.* The Bible repreſents all theſe things as done by his own voice; *He*

ſpake

SERM XXX. *ſpake and it was done, he commanded and it ſtood faſt: By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hoſts of them by the breath of his mouth.* We read of no ſuch officer as the new ſcheme calls an inſtrument. We underſtand no other author of the univerſe than him who has the glory of it. Not an Angel in heaven dare arrogate to himſelf the making of a worm, the rearing up of a plant; no, they talk of the world as the immediate production of Omnipotence. *Thou haſt created all things, and for thy pleaſure they are and were created. Thro' faith we underſtand that the worlds were fram'd by the word of God, ſo that the things which are ſeen, were not made of things that do appear. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who has created theſe things that brings out their hoſt by number; he calls them all by names, by the greatneſs of his might, for that he is ſtrong in power.*

Pſ. xxxiii. 6, 7.

Rev. iv. ult.

Heb. xi. 3.

Iſa. xl. 26.

But now there's a greater glory than this; that is, there's a nobler deſign, and a more wondrous performance, and that is the redemption of a choſen people. The Scripture has given this the preference, and the honour of it is left upon Chriſt, not as excluſive of the Father, but in ſuch a way as is maintain'd by what he ſaith, *I am in the Father, and the Father in me.* And again, *Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him; if God be glorified in him, God ſhall glorifie him in himſelf.* He ſpeaks this of the ſucceſs of that great deſign that he came about. There's more of God to be ſeen in this affair than there was in any other, and where are we to look for it? Well, he that *brought light out of darkneſs, gives us the light of the glory of God in the face or perſon of Jeſus Chriſt.*

Joh. xvi. 33.

2 Cor. iv. 6.

And can we think that the ſupreme God is to rejoice in the work of his hands, that the earth is full of his riches? Is he to be honour'd in what we ſee he has done? And ſhall a glory much greater

greater and more sublime be given to one who *by nature is no God?* Shall he who has the name only by virtue of an office have an extent of empire which the Father never claim'd? Shall *all the ends of the earth look* unto the Son, and he be no more than a titular Deity, when the real God was only known in *Judah*, and had his name great in *Israel?* Must there be an effusion of the Spirit, a gift of tongues, a thing that never had been in the world before, and it's likely never shall be again, and all this to establish the interest of a creature? For it is Christ in whom *all the seed of Israel are to be justified and to glory.* SERM. XXX.

The Gospel of the kingdom is call'd the *world to come*, and methinks there's a dignity in the title; it was future to the *Jews*, 'tis the last dispensation that God will give, and it bears upon it the glory of the state above. Now it is observ'd, that *to none of the Angels has he put in subjection the world to come of which we speak.* He has put kingdoms and armies in subjection to an Angel, by making him the minister of providence; but here's an affair that none of them must preside in: And can we imagine, that so much care should be taken to tell us, that not one of the Angels has this dominion, and yet that it's given to another creature? If he is so very express and peremptory in laying aside the Angels, we should have thought it was because he has so often said, *His glory he will not give to another.* And therefore how comes one who was less than an Angel to have it, but from the consideration of a nature more *above* theirs than what he took upon him was *below* 'em? You find the Angels praising God for creating *the heavens and the earth, and the fountains of waters;* and yet the Lamb is proclaim'd as the author of a much greater work. The lower the grosser glories are ascrib'd to the supreme God, and will he communi- Heb. ii. 5.

cate

SERM. XXX. cate those to any beneath himself which are the fruit of a nobler contrivance? No, Christ Jesus is therefore *made of God to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, that according as it is written, he that glories, may glory in the* LORD.

(2.) These people who preach'd Christ among the *Gentiles* could never go farther in their duty to the great God than they did to him. *None of us,* Rom. xiv. 7, 8, 9. say they, *lives to himself, and none dies to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether therefore we live or die, we are the Lords.* 'Tis Jesus whom he speaks of as this Lord, as you see by the next words, *For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and reviv'd, that* HE *might be the Lord both of dead and* 2 Cor. vi. ult. *living.* Thus the argument runs, *Ye are not your own, but bought with a price; and therefore glorify God in your bodies, and your spirits, which are* GOD's. You are not your own, *Whose are you then?* If being bought with a price, makes you belong to *another,* it must be to *Him* who paid that price: And who can that be? Or how are you to express his propriety in you, but by *glorifying him as God,* and looking upon your bodies and spirits to be his? They are said to be *God's,* and therefore if he who paid this price is not God, what he did gives him no claim upon us.

You see that this text will take a great deal of garbling to distinguish the shares of duty between the Father and the Son, if the one is the supreme Being, and the other but a creature. Thus when Phil. i. 20. the Apostle saith, it was *his earnest expectation, his desire, his confidence, that as at all times, so now* CHRIST *should be magnified in his mortal body, whether it be by life or by death;* for saith he, *To me to live is Christ.* Could he possibly go any farther in a profession of duty to the most high God? And has the Scripture been so lavish in claiming

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our ſervice to Chriſt, that there is not the leaſt de- SERM.
gree more reſerv'd for a Being that's infinitely greater XXX.
than he?

Suppoſe we had never read any more than what the Apoſtle preach'd at *Athens*, that they ought not to think the Godhead like unto gold or ſilver, or ſtone graven with art and man's device, but look upon him as a Being that *made the heavens, the earth, and the ſea, and all things therein*; one whoſe image we are, *in whom we live, and move, and have our being*. He adds, that this God *has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs by that* MAN *whom he has ordained, whereof he has given aſſurance to all men, in that he has raiſed him from the dead*. Had we never read any more of Chriſt than what he ſaith here, we might have thought him to be nothing higher than a *man*. Now it is not to the human nature that he has committed this *judgment*; for tho' he that is the judge is a man, yet he muſt be *more* for that deſign.

But why ſhould he ever be repreſented as *God?* Why does the Apoſtle in other places give him higher titles than he uſes to theſe *Athenians?* The conſequence of this can be only enſnaring us in our duty if he is not God; and, for my part, I ſhall have no regard to their new ſchemes, till they can tell me how far I'm to go in my devotion to a Saviour, and where I am to ſtop. For the Scripture has made it very dangerous to love him too little: Such a one muſt be *Anathema Maranatha*; and I'm ſure it is idolatry to love him too much. And you need not ſay this is impoſſible, for if he is a creature, it's a very eaſy matter, and what the Pſalmiſt would have been afraid of, when he ſaid, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth whom I deſire beſides thee.* Pſal. lxxiii. 25.

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(3.) Christ maintains his interest in the most divine way, by a spiritual presence with his people; so that though his body is in heaven, he is still in every Christian; and we dare not say to any but God, *Thou compassest my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thy hand upon me.* The heavens have receiv'd him till the time of the restitution of all things, yet it is language peculiar to a God to say, *I will walk among them, and be in them.* And we may soon suppose what sentiments *Paul* had of him, when he saith, *I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me, and the life I live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

Pſ. cxxxix. 3, 5.

Gal. ii. 20.

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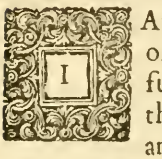
SERMON XXXI.

July 5. 1723.



Am now to shew you that this branch of Christianity enjoys the same beautiful character that's given of all the rest, that it is a mystery of GODLINESS, and promotes a *pure and undefiled religion before God and our Father*. For this was Christ himself a preacher of righteousness; for this did he ordain his witnesses among those he had chosen; for this is the same *faithful word committed to others*, who are charged to hold it fast, and to hold it forth. To this end is the word of salvation sent among you. We therefore insist upon a *hope that is laid up for you in heaven, that it* may *bring forth fruit in you, as it does in all the world* where it is heartily believed. And I think, this being the business of our preaching, the design of the ministry that we have received, it is supposed, that, in order to fulfil it, we proclaim the Divinity of that glorious Person whose name is to be carried among the *Gentiles*. *For*, he says, *from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered to* MY *name, and a pure offering*; *for* MY *name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.*

SERM. XXXI.

Jam. i. 27.

Col. i. 5, 6.

Mal. i. 11.

If he is not God, we are sent upon a foolish errand, and tell the heathen no more than they imagine already, that there are supreme and subordinate deities. Perhaps indeed, their number of *under-*

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under-gods is greater than ours in the new ſcheme, but the ſubſtance of their religion is the very ſame with what ſome people have given us for primitive Chriſtianity. They talk of a Trinity, by which they mean no more than one God, and two creatures. But *to whom will ye liken me, or ſhall I be equal, ſaith the holy one?* Now as this is wide from the revelation that's given us in the Goſpel, ſo it is ſubverſive of all that practice, by which we are to *adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.*

Iſa. xl. 18.

Tit. ii. 10.

I will here endeavour to ſhew you the different tendency of preaching Chriſt as the true *God*, and giving him only the *name*; and by comparing theſe two ſorts of miniſters, you will eaſily ſee which of 'em is moſt likely to promote the reformation of ſinners, and the comfort of believers. And here, don't ſuppoſe that I am covering a cowardly deſign under a ſhew of deceitful words. When I ſay that the Son is God, I mean as much by the title, as if I apply'd it to the Father; and without ſuch an upright unreſerved way of talking, I ſhould both impoſe upon you, and betray the doctrines of the Goſpel. Now, I ſay, that they who in preaching *the unſearchable riches of Chriſt* tell the *Gentiles* that he is truly, eternally, and ſupremely God, are moſt likely to attain the ends of the miniſtry of reconciliation that is committed to them. Becauſe

Theſe men ſpeak plain, we know what they mean; they come with a ſubject of their miniſtry that deſerves to be ſo; the account they give us of the Goſpel revelation is moſt agreeable to the merciful nature of our God, who never deſign'd to betray us into idolatry; 'tis ſuch a report as anſwers the demand they make of our duty; 'tis harmonious to the nature of that dependence that we muſt have upon Chriſt; it provides for all the comfort

comfort we can ſtand in need of, and it gives a better proſpect of the future glory when we know the perſon from whom we expect it is a God. SERM. XXXI.

1. That miniſter who preaches up the divinity of Chriſt, and tells the world plainly, that he is no other than the moſt high God, is likely to promote religion among men, becauſe he ſpeaks out. We ſee, we know what he means. We are miniſters *according to the faith of God's elect, and the* ACKOWLEDGING *of the truth, which is after godlineſs: In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promiſed before the world began; but has in due time manifeſted his word through preaching, which is committed to us, according to the commandment of God our Saviour.* God never ſent men abroad to ſhuffle with their learning, and make their skill in criticiſms, original languages, and antient writers, no more than an occaſion to throw the world into the greateſt uncertainties about the chief object of their faith and hope. *Should a wiſe man utter vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the eaſt wind? Should he reaſon with unprofitable talk, or with ſpeeches wherewith he can do no good?* Shall their *mouth uter their iniquity, and they chooſe the tongue of the crafty?* Tit. i. 1, 2, 3. Job xv. 2, 3, 5.

Is that the fruit of ſtudying *Greek* and *Hebrew*, of turning over vaſt volumes of antiquity, that we ſhall grow more capable of unhinging mankind, removing 'em from their old foundation, without the honeſty of ſhewing 'em another. The Lord God gave to Chriſt *the tongue of the learned that he ſhould know how to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to him that is weary*, not ſet him a rambling in eternal mazes, by words that are never to be underſtood. Are thoſe men of God's raiſing up, whoſe divinity goes no farther than to ſtrike off our faith from the perſon on whom it was fix'd, and never tell us what's to Iſa. l. 4;

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become of it? Is that to be the result of all their enquiries, that they will use a good spirit, just as our Saviour saith it fares with an evil one; that it is sent abroad, *seeking rest and finding none? If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?* No good end ever was answer'd, or ever can be, by those shuffling arts, that leave the hearer more uncertain than they found him. If my opinion is agreeable to the will of God, I may tell it boldly, for so *I ought to speak: Seeing we have such hope we use great plainness of speech; not putting a vail over our faces as Moses did; renouncing the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of the Lord deceitfully.* The servants of such a master ought to use no disguise and no reserve; and for my part I can see no other end answer'd than to confound the world, when men are afraid to *call* our Saviour a creature, and yet take all the pains they can to *prove* him so.

Psal. xi. 3. Eph. vi. 19, 20. 2 Cor. iii. 12, 13. iv. 2.

What a scheme must that be, that allows him neither to be a *God* nor a *creature?* That explains away the *first* name, and trembles at giving the *second?* What's the reason that men do not speak out? Why must our doctrine be rejected for being mysterious and self-contradicting, when here's another put upon us that appears to be *so* at the first opening? How monstrous is it to talk of a created God? Or, of one that was not created, and yet had a beginning? Of a time that he was not, and yet that he is eternal? Of infinite perfections, and yet all deriv'd? Of an Omniscience that does not know all things, and an Omnipotence that cannot do all things? Really this is not disputing about actions, but expressions; 'tis robbing us not only of doctrines but of words; 'tis using them in divinity, as they must be us'd no where else. *But we write no other things than what you read or acknowledge,*

2 Cor. i. 13.

acknowledge, and I trust you shall acknowledge even to the end. SERM. XXXI.

Where's the necessity of a minister's doubling at this vile rate? Can we ever think that God sent out any of his servants upon such a foolish errand? Why must not mankind know what they mean? What good end can they propound to themselves, by deceiving people with *confessions*, and then explaining all the sense of them away; leading the world into a confidence of their believing what indeed they abhor, and only waiting for a proper season to laugh at the credulity of those they've impos'd on? "For my part, if I did not believe "that Christ is *over all, God blessed for ever*, in the "same sense that the Father is so, I should think "it my duty to preach back what I have been "advancing among you, not call your faith *to* him, "but call it *from* him: I durst not for any lucre "of filth or fame, leave you at an uncertainty "what I'm speaking of, nor could I expect any "blessing upon that sermon which gives such a "character of Jesus Christ, that all the people who "hear it, know not whether I'm describing a God "or a creature, as if I was raising up an *altar with* "*this inscription, To the unknown God.* It does not "only leave you hovering about a truth, but at "a full stand in your duty.

We bid you *believe in him*; but can any mortal determine what's meant by this faith, if he does not know the object upon which it is to fix? The Apostles told their minds plainly in the face of as much danger as ever persons did; but *as they were allow'd of God, and put in trust with the Gospel, so they spake not as pleasing men, but God that searches the hearts; neither did they at any time use flattering words*, accommodating their doctrines to the humour of their hearers, *nor a cloak of covetousness.* 1 Thes. ii. 4, 5.

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That opinion does not look like truth, that's afraid of ſhewing it ſelf. If you ſee any light twinkling, and then falling back again, ſometimes out, and ſometimes in, you may be ſure it's not the ſun, but a trifling vapour, that appears for a moment and then vaniſhes away: And as it comes out of a *bog*, it will lead you into one. But I hope *we are not as many who corrupt the word of God, but as of ſincerity as of God, in the ſight of God ſpeak we in Chriſt.*

2 Cor. ii. 17.

2. They who preach up Chriſt as the moſt high God, do inſiſt upon ſuch an object of their miniſtry as deſerves to be ſo. What a poor buſineſs would it be for men to have a miraculous furniture and a miraculous vocation, the gift of tongues, and the continual guard of providence, and all this to make known a creature? That when they rejoic'd ſo much in the title of being the ſervants of Chriſt, they ſhould mean no more by it than their attachment to one who had nothing higher than deriv'd perfections! Do they go and preach up one who is not to be ador'd?

That they ſpeak of him in a nature that is *not* omnipotent, and muſt not be worſhip'd, that was dependent and paſſive, is true enough; but they had never been ſent out into the world, to tell mankind that he was born and liv'd with our infirmities, that he died and was buried. No, they muſt be *witneſſes* to theſe facts; but their being *ſervants* to him ſuppoſes a higher character, that he had in him a nature that had no beginning, no bounds, no pain, no death; therefore they might well talk of ſuch a one to the world, becauſe he made it: for *without him was not any thing made that was made.*

Joh. i. 3.

Conſider what it is to preach Chriſt Jeſus. There's a homage in this work, which no creature has ever challeng'd

challeng'd from us. The vile way of the Papists in running over the story of a saint, proposing him as a pattern, and offering his dry bones for the help of faith, is profane and foolish. *When they say to you, seek to them that have familiar spirits, and to wizards, that peep and mutter, should not a people seek to their God? for the living to the dead?* The root of such a doctrine is rottenness, and the blossom of it shall go up as dust. We may, and do mention the lives of ministers and eminent christians, bidding you *follow their faith, and consider the end of their conversation*; but will any man call this *preaching* of *Moses* or *Paul?* Nay, the very Angels who do us so many kind offices are not the subject of our ministry. We may preach of them as they are *ministring spirits to the heirs of salvation*, but that is not calling mankind to depend upon 'em. They will not allow us to do any thing that has the least resemblance of an adoration. The Apostle *John* was much obliged to that Angel whom Christ had sent with a revelation of things to come; he had led him thro' the apartments of the new *Jerusalem*; he had shew'd him that glorious city *coming down from God out of heaven*, and yet he will not allow the good man to fall down at his feet.

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Isa. viii. 19.

Heb. xiii. 7.

Rev. xxii. 9.

I cannot imagine that the Apostle design'd him what we call religious worship; for you must think him grosly ignorant, if he could after all these discoveries confound his homage to God by giving it equally to him and to a creature; but he thought some degree of extraordinary respect ought to be shewn, and this the Angel will not suffer for that awful reason, *Worship thou God.*

Might he not easily have distinguish'd about worship as some do in our day, and said, There's a devotion that I pay to none but God, and this

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ſubordinate duty to thee is no breach of that? But the Angel leaves no room for that whiffling talk; he intimates, that there is always to be the greateſt and moſt viſible diſtinction between our behaviour to God, and that to a creature, let him be never ſo glorious and benevolent. Well,

Bring this to the caſe of our Saviour; if he was only a creature, he would always uſe the ſame freedom with his people that he did with the young man in the Goſpel, who took him for no more.

Matt. xix. 17. *Why calleſt thou me good, there is none good but one, and that is God.* But when we preach Him, it's in the ſame way that we preach the Father, that he is the *Lord of the ends of the earth*, the God for whom are all things, and by whom are all things; we could not go out in the ſervice of one leſs than He. The heathen ſhall never have it to ſay of us, as we may of their prieſts, that we are ſervants of thoſe who

Gal. iv. 8. *by nature are no gods.* Angels themſelves are preachers of this Saviour, and what can that be owing to? Not his taking upon him our nature, for that made him lower than they; not his having a created nature above 'em, for that would no more make him the object of *their* worſhip than their ſuperiority to us makes them the object of *ours*; but they conſider him as their Author, and as their End, from whoſe hand they receiv'd their being,

Col. i. 16, 17. and to whoſe glory they muſt refer it. *For by him were all things created in heaven and in earth, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him and for him: He is before all things, and by him all things conſiſt.* 'Tis plain he ſpeaks of him here under another nature from what he does in the next clauſe, that *he is the firſt-begotten from the dead*; That did not prove him before all things, becauſe it happen'd in theſe laſt days.

No

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No wonder that they who do not look upon him as a God, have more zeal againſt his divinity than they have for his honour. That all their ſtrength, and time, and learning, ſhould not be to lead on our duty to a Saviour, but to limit it, to ſtun it, to confound it. They cannot be ſaid to preach Chriſt Jeſus, *warning every man, and teaching every man.* They do *warn* every man indeed, not to look on him as a God, but they can hardly be ſaid to *teach* every man; for if *the trumpet give an uncertain ſound, who ſhall prepare himſelf for the battel?* and leaſt of all do they think to *preſent every man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus.* No really, if he is a creature, there's no hopes of any perfection in him. It is ſaid of a perſon who loves the light, that *he comes to the light, that it may be made manifeſt, that his deeds are wrought in* GOD; and I ſhould be aſham'd to talk of your perfection IN CHRIST, if I did not think it an expreſſion of the ſame import and value. But be it known to you, that our miniſtry is *not of deceit or guile.* We ſpeak of him who is the former of all things, and therefore are not *aſham'd of the Goſpel of* CHRIST, *becauſe it is the power of* GOD. The Apoſtle ſpeaks of *the glorious Goſpel of the bleſſed God, that was committed to his truſt,* and adds in the ſame breath, *I thank Chriſt Jeſus our Lord who has enabled me, putting me into the miniſtry.*

1 Cor. xiv. 8.

Joh. iii. 21.

Rom. i. 16.

1 Tim. i. 11, 12.

3. This account agrees with the merciful nature of God, that he ſhould tell us things without the leaſt diſguiſe. *The words of the Lord are pure words.* He has call'd Angels and kings by his own name, they are *gods,* but what a bar is there between his title and theirs? *Who in the heavens can be compar'd unto the Lord? who among the ſons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?* The Scripture has thrown us into no danger of confounding the two ſorts of

Pſal. xii. 6.

Pſ. lxxxix. 6.

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deities. No mortal can say, if he worships a prince, that he takes him to be omniscient and eternal, tho' he is call'd a god.

The greatest affair that we can have upon our hands, is a devotion to him that made us; and therefore had he left us in the dark, whom to worship, and whom not, he had thrown his own glory under a cloud, and the souls of mankind into a snare. But it is written with all plainness, Matt. iv. 10. *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* And how unhappy is it for us, that the duty we pay to Christ should go by the same name, and be expressed as if given in the same degree both in heaven and in earth, if he is not God?

To tell us that we ought to distinguish, is to tell us nothing to the purpose. The question is, whether the difference lies so plain, that he that runs may read it? 'Tis but a poor answer, to say there are men of critical learning who can soften and curtail the greatest names that are given to a Saviour, and divest 'em of their greatest sense. What becomes of the ignorant, who are the more numerous part of the world? Could they find it out in the Scripture-trinity, that the first person is divine and adorable, the second divine but not adorable, the third neither adorable nor divine? Do not say, that it is not necessary for these to speak of a Trinity, an hypostatical union, or the imputation of another's righteousness; that a man may be very good and serious without entring into these speculations. How dangerous is an insinuation of this nature? Can a person be religious who worships he knows not what? who is at a loss whether Christ Jesus is the object of his reverence or no? who either does not know God, and not glorify him *as God?* or on the other hand is serving a creature

creature equally with the Creator, who is over all, blessed for ever? SERM. XXXI.

Here's a good man may be a believer, and yet at a loss about the object of his faith. The love of Christ constrains him, and yet he knows not who Christ is. *He thus judges, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died, that they who live, should not live to themselves, but to him that died for them and rose again.* 2 Cor. v. 15. 'Tis as much as could be said of the great God, that we live to him, and yet it is paid to one who by these men is suppos'd infinitely beneath him. But blessed be God, those good people who will suffer no deviations from their duty, are in no uncertainty about him to whom it is given, he is declared to be the son of God with power. *They know in whom they have believed.* As he is called God, they depend upon him with full confidence, and it's pity that they who shew'd such a zeal for the Gospel in all ages should be left in the dark, and be all along strangers to a truth that is now brought to light by men that are not much superior to them in holiness, whatever they are in politeness.

4. When we preach Christ as God, it answers the demand of your duty to him. We bid you pray to him, call upon him, trust in him, and wait for him; which is more than we durst do for a creature, because 'tis as much as we can do for a God. Had we preach'd under the old Testament, we must have insisted upon the glory of God, and the faithfulness of *Moses:* That the great God had revealed his will, and *Moses* was the person by whom the world should have it, and therefore they are to believe in the one according to what they hear of him by the other. But there would be no confounding of these two. Certainly we must talk in a very unhappy way, if any of our hearers

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ers ſhould ſuppoſe we call'd for the ſame duty to *Moſes* that we did to God.

And yet in this promiſcuous manner do we ſpeak
Joh.xiv.1. of the Father and the Son. *You believe in God*, ſaith Chriſt, *believe alſo in me.* We dare make no diſtinction, the words are plain, they need no changing: but upon ſuch a text, others will bring in a *Scripture-conſequence*, tho' we may not; that is, they will apply a conſequence to deſtroy the truth, and they are angry that we take ſuch a method to maintain it. We are commanded by theſe men to bring plain words of Scripture without any human explication; when we do ſo, they will not let them ſtand, but ſtrive to take off their native force and luſtre by the very method of interpretation which they deny to others.

If Chriſt has not infinite perfections, what have we been doing among you? Our preaching is in vain, and your faith in vain. We have argu'd, threaten'd, call'd, perſuaded, beſought you, to do what? to truſt in a God that cannot ſave? in one that has a name, but is infinitely beneath the eternal Nature? We ought to be afraid leſt your faith ſhould fix too low, and ſay as the Apoſtle did, *Ye men of Iſrael, why gaze ye on us, as tho' we by our own power and holineſs had made this man to walk.* And ſo here, we ſhould ſay, " 'Tis true, Chriſt " this Saviour was very pure in himſelf, and very " kind to you; you're to love him as a friend, and " admire him as the chiefeſt among ten thouſand: " but take care that you do not love him with all " your heart, with all your mind, and with all " your ſtrength. Remember the grace that he " gives, and the glory that he promiſes is not his " own: he's only the ſervant, and therefore all your " affections to him muſt be as much diſtinguiſh'd " from worſhip, as a creature is diſtinguiſh'd from " a God."

But,

But, as you know, we have never talk'd at this rate, so I am persuaded it would strike every serious person with horror if we should, who could take the pulpit to be no better than *the seat of the scornful.* And yet thus we must have preach'd, if we had maintain'd any consistence in our notions, or any honesty to our people. I should think it my duty, if I had been preaching never so long about the glorious nature of the Angels, and the innumerable offices of kindness they have done us, still to close all with a warning lest you should run into *a worshiping of Angels.* Now the danger would be greater, as Christ is more excellent than they; and therefore if he was not the proper object of our worship, we ought not to leave you in the snare. SERM. XXXI.

5. This agrees to the nature of your dependence upon him. Our Gospel tells us, there is *salvation in no other.* And he himself said, *If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.* So that our whole regard is collected to him. There's no putting him off with a share of it, but he must have it all. And will He, who is a jealous God, and has plainly told us, thou shalt have *no other gods before me,* suffer all this plunder from a creature? Tho' an Angel is a great deal better than a prince, yet I should sooner be admitted to trust in the latter than the former: for perhaps a vain foolish man would allow me in all the extravagance of my faith upon him; but an Angel would immediately say, *See thou, do it not;* and he must be very unworthy of the Divine favours to him if he did not so.

Now, if Christ Jesus is better than the Angels, and still a creature, I should expect more zeal from Him than from them against any misapplication of my faith and duty. He of all others would never say, *Look unto me, and be ye sav'd all the ends of* Isa. xlv. 22.

SERM. XXXI. *of the earth*, if he could not alſo ſay, *I am God, and there is none elſe.* It was Lucifer's wickedneſs, when he was made the Son of the morning, that he
Isa. xiv. 12. would *ſet his throne as the throne of God.* The dignity of his nature was an aggravation of his crime; and ſo it would be in our bleſſed Lord. All his advancement above the Angels obliges *him* more than *them* to ſecure the Divine honour entire by taking none of it to himſelf.

6. This provides for all the comfort that we can ſtand in need of. We have it in Chriſt, who
Joh. xiv. 27. xvi. 33. ſaid, *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world gives give I unto you; In the world ye ſhall have trouble, but in me ye ſhall have peace.* This peace and joy come in a way of *believing*; our faith upon him fetches it down: And can we think that a creature is able to do all this? When
Pſal. cxxxviii. 3. *David* ſaith, *Strengthen me with ſtrength in my ſoul*, I cannot ſuppoſe but that he ſpeaks of a Divine operation; ſomething that none but a God can do. And do believers under the new Teſtament look any lower for their conſolations than thoſe under the old? The Pſalmiſt could ſay, *Whom*
lxxiii. 25, 26. *have I in heaven but Thee? my fleſh and my heart fails; but* GOD *is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* And have we *One more* in heaven beſides him? Is ours a deſcending, a falling faith? Does it come *down* from its chief object, and find a partner with God? Do you think when the A-
2 Tim. iv. 17. poſtle ſaith, *The Lord ſtood by me, and ſtrengthen'd me*, he means any leſs than that God, who was the ſtrength of *David*'s heart? A creature may pity you, but a God, you're ſure, is capable of helping
1 Pet. i. 8. you. Now Chriſt is He, *whom having not ſeen, ye love, and in whom, tho' now ye ſee him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with a joy unſpeakable and full of glory.*

7. This

7. This gives us a better prospect of the future glory: *The end of your faith is the salvation of your souls.* When we tell you of heaven, and you hear that life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel, it's Christ that must convey you thither: *I will come again,* saith he, *and receive you to myself, that where I am, ye may be also.* But how vain would it be to have this said of a creature? We find it hard enough to believe that *he is able to save to the uttermost*; but if he was not a God, those difficulties would increase upon us. Our faith stands *in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* We cannot tell but an Angel is mighty enough to carry our souls thro' the air into the region of spirits, as it's said they did that of *Lazarus:* but on purpose to let us see what we have to trust to, our expectations are fix'd a great deal higher. And when Christ saith, I will receive you to myself, I believe it's a promise equivalent to *David*'s hope: *Thou wilt guide me by thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to thy glory.* Don't think that he under the old Testament had his dependence upon God, and that we in these better days have our faith and confidence in no more than a creature.

ver. 9. Joh. xiv. 3. Eph. vi. 10.

The application of this is what I have but little room for: I will therefore confine myself to these three particulars.

(1.) If it is GOD whom we preach to the Gentiles, a God manifest in the flesh, then you may be very sure we have no reason to be asham'd of the testimony of our Lord, nor ought you to be asham'd of those that are *his prisoners, but be partakers of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the power of God.* Not but that we are like to meet with the same reproach among Christians, that the Apostles did among the heathen. In preaching up

2 Tim. i. 8.

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the Deity of Christ Jesus, some are ready now to represent us as *setters forth of strange gods.*

Acts xvii. 18.

Could we have been content to have shunn'd or amended the faith that was once deliver'd to the Saints, the enemy wou'd have had as little provocation as they have real ground for a volley of reproaches. We should never have been charg'd with setting up a human authority, or framing a court of *inquisition*, or depreciating the word of God. Men that depart from this doctrine, stand clear of these accusations, tho' it's known well enough their scheme will never do in the bare language of Scripture. They have leave to talk of an originated God, and an improper eternity, and use as many barbarous terms as they please, without any blame for departing from the words of the Bible. What plain passages are there in the way, which they are forc'd to work themselves thro' with distinctions and expositions? This liberty of explaining a notion in them is free thinking; but in us its laying aside *the form of sound words.* Well, my friends, the cause we are engag'd in is worth all this, and a thousand times more; for if it is a God whom we preach, we know he both can and will maintain his interest, and he will also own his servants who have own'd him: for such a one alone is *head over all things unto the church,* as he has *the fulness of him that fills all in all.*

(2.) Let us, upon this account, recommend ourselves to your friendship and hearty prayers. You see we are *set for the defence of the Gospel.* Reproaches flie about of an unusual kind, and from

2 Thes. iii. 2.

an unsuspected quarter: *Pray that we may be deliver'd from unreasonable and wicked men, for all men have not faith.* Suppose the enemy should prevail to stop our mouths, or pollute our integrity, and that you're brought to attend upon ministers, whose

whoſe prudence will not ſuffer 'em to tell you that Chriſt is God; what would become of religion in your cloſets and your families? therefore ſuffer me to beſpeak your kindneſs as the Apoſtle does: *Pray for us, that God would open to us a door of utterance to ſpeak the myſtery of Chriſt; for which I am alſo in bonds, that I may make it manifeſt as I ought to ſpeak.* Col. iv. 3, 4.

(3.) It's from our preaching Chriſt as GOD, that we can have any hope that he is *believ'd on in the world.*

The End of the firſt Volume.